Commentary

Volume Fifty-Six, Number Four, October 1973

MAILER'S "MARILYN"
Clive James

WHO IS BUCKMINSTER FULLER?
Sara Sanborn

THINKING ABOUT THE CITY
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OIL
Walter Laqueur and Edward Luttwak

GENTLEMEN & SCHOLARS
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ON JEALOUSY
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Books in Review: James Q. Wilson/Roger Starr/Jane Larkin Crain
Roger M. Williams/Maurice Friedberg/Louis Berg

An Exchange on Masada: Robert Alter and Critics

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Commentary

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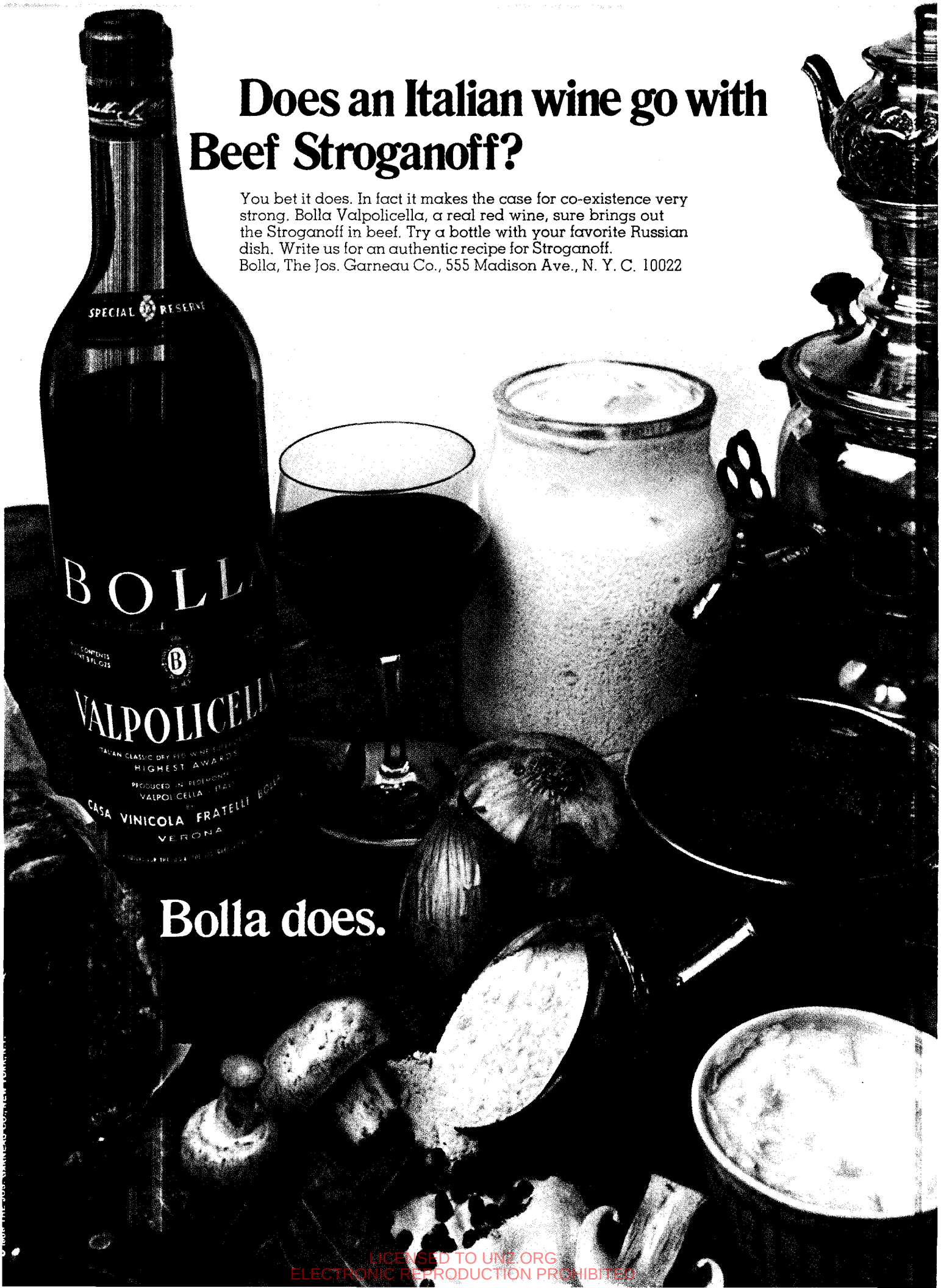

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Letters from Readers

The Question of Masada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Those who ask, as Robert Alter does ["The Masada Complex," July], how Josephus could have fabricated the fiction of the mass suicide of Masada's Sicarii, when several thousand Romans were eyewitnesses to the end of Masada, anachronistically transpose modern methods of news dissemination to antiquity, some fifteen centuries before the invention of movable type and some nineteen centuries before news reporting by wireless. Yet even today, news is being manipulated and distorted, and not only in dictatorships. Some years ago, during a brief stay in my native city of Frankfurt-am-Main (at the time of one of the Auschwitz trials), I engaged men, women, and children in conversation and asked them about the Nazi crimes against Jews. The stereotypical exclamation was: "We didn't know what was happening." Yet the Jews of Frankfurt were rounded up and deported to concentration camps within sight of multitudes, and surely the fires of the *Kristallnacht* which destroyed all Frankfurt's synagogues were not invisible. . . .

Few, if any, of the Roman soldiers who besieged and took Masada returned to Rome. It was a time before the mass airlift of troops. As for the few officers who might have returned to Rome, they would not have disputed Josephus's official version of the end of Masada which, I suggest, was intended to prove that the Sicarii were cowards who, when confronted with the necessity of meeting the Romans on the field of battle, were said to have "chickened out" and committed suicide. The fiction about mass suicide on Masada could not but be gratifying to Flavius Silva, commander of the siege force; it proved that the Sicarii's three-year defiance was possible only because of the inaccessibility of Masada, until the Romans succeeded in building the assault ramp.

H. St. John Thackeray, the noted authority on Josephus, asserted that Eleazar ben Ya'ir's speeches "were doubtless penned in the writer's [Josephus's] scriptorium in Rome." It has also been noted by Josephus experts that this kind of speech could not have been made by a guerrilla leader, such as Eleazar. Yet, strange though it seems, Yigael Yadin took it for granted that this "fabricated" speech contained explicit information which he [Yadin] then "proved" to be authentic by means of his excavations on Masada.

In view of Yadin's expertise and sophistication in identifying ancient artifacts and manuscripts, one may well wonder whether *his* "Masada complex" does not derive from what Freud termed the *Thanatos* instinct—the drive toward and fascination with death, which is vicariously being indulged in by those who enjoy melodrama that invariably ends in death. The Josephus version of Masada is the kind of sentimental *kitsch* melodrama the spuriousness of which is all too apparent. Certainly not one single find excavated on Masada can be taken as proof of the Josephus fiction of mass suicide on Masada.

TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Alter's skepticism about Masada as described by Josephus seems based on two grounds: first, that is is not mentioned in rabbinic literature; and second, that suicide was regarded as an act of desperation, condemned by laymen and learned alike.

With regard to the silence in rabbinic literature on Masada, let us recall that other significant historic events also received little attention. For example, the Maccabean revolt against the Syrians is scarcely mentioned in rabbinic discourse. . . . It is worth noting that the celebration of Hannukah is reduced to the story of finding in the Temple a small vessel containing a quantity of oil which should have lasted only one day but instead lasted eight. . . .

Why were the defenders of Masada so resolved on self-annihilation? I would like to present my interpretation, previously set forth in an article, "The Tragic End of the Masada Warrior" (*Die Zukunft*, April 1970). On reading *The Jewish Wars*, I paused at the chapter giving the speech of the Masada rebel commander, Eleazar ben Ya'ir. Although that speech is

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attributed to one individual, it in fact reflects two quite disparate ideologies. One can almost hear the separate voices of two distinct ways of life, two distinct schools of thought—that is, of the Zealots and of the Essenes. To come to terms with the oration of Masada, then, it is important to understand that the Essenes were adamant in their hatred of subjugation to any oppressor, to any act of violence. Their capacity to withstand physical torture, to clench their teeth and not shed a tear when savage brutes excoriated their bodies, astonished the cruelest of the cruel. . . .

Taking literary liberties, Josephus attempted to fuse the two orations into one, but he failed in this respect. Although the Essenean orator at Masada remained anonymous, his exhortation exercised an enormous effect on his audience. On the one hand, Eleazar, the Zealot, evoked the patriotic feelings of the combatants. He urged them to uphold the honor of the Jewish people, to maintain the glory gained during the long siege. He argued that by the loss of their lives they would poison the blood of the savage Romans, thus sealing the encounter with an unparalleled victory over the enemy. In contrast to the warrior Eleazar's appeal, intended to arouse the feelings of all as a community, the anonymous Essene stirred the emotions of each as an individual. He described the joy and relief of freedom that each person acquires after death. While the Zealot repudiated the slavery of a people, the Essene portrayed life itself as slavery. He dealt not with the wars that people may wage against one another but with the more intensified struggle that goes on within each person; the constant battle that persists between body and spirit. The ultimate victory in that area is achieved after death. Although the Zealot and the Essene developed two different philosophies, both ultimately arrived at the same conclusion—that it would be better for the women to die than to be raped, defiled, and contaminated; better for the children to perish than to be traded as cattle; better for the men to depart from this life than to be tortured or to lose their lives to beasts in circuses to the delight of Roman onlookers.

Masada stands out as a beacon signaling the Jewish people's passion for freedom. Atop this beacon a flag waves with the inscription: "In thy blood live" (Ezekiel, 16:6).

WILLIAM BURSTEIN
Rockville, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Masada Complex" Robert Alter refers to the events at the fall of Jotapata in which Josephus, then the commanding general, "seems to have tricked thirty-nine fellow soldiers . . . into killing one another while he cunningly preserved his own life" and thinks that Josephus "might have had reason to repair his damaged public image by fabricating a large-scale suicide pact at Masada. . . ."

There are some problems in this view as there will always be with Josephus, the supreme turncoat, who lived to write the only eyewitness account of this period. . . . Both accounts were written long after the war. The Jewish nation had been destroyed and it is not clear therefore for what public Josephus's image was tarnished. He was a favorite of both the emperors Vespasian and Titus, which would have made any expression of criticism rather dangerous. Also, apart from one other survivor—who also violated the pact—the affair was known to Josephus alone. Why, then, should he have written what, to us, seems such a damaging account? . . . But perhaps to Josephus's reading public, Greeks and Romans of 100 C.E., cunning and treachery were considered tolerable and quite normal behavior. While simple soldiers were normally butchered, captured generals were dragged in chains through a Roman triumphal procession and beheaded at its termination. . . .

Josephus's companions at Jotapata, we are told (by him, of course), were determined on suicide before capture. Josephus, having had a contrary vision, was not. Visions at this time had the same weight as facts with us. Josephus certainly believed his, and a few weeks later he had another which providentially saved him from being dispatched to Rome for one of Nero's triumphs.

At this time Josephus was thirty years old. He was sixty before these events were finally recorded and published. He was present at Jotapata and absent at Masada, but . . . his accounts of both events . . . seem quite reasonable.

HUBERT R. CATCHPOLE
Chicago, Illinois

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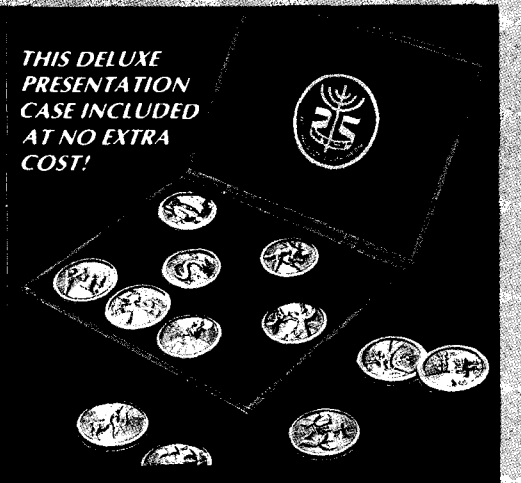

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To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Robert Alter treads on dangerous ground in questioning the "myth of Masada" as recounted by Josephus. The latter was proved to be remarkably accurate in many details by the archaeological findings of Yigael Yadin. Mr. Alter himself states that Josephus could hardly have invented the suicide story of the 960 defenders inasmuch as thousands of Romans had conquered the fortress and seen the victims. But he notes there are no other sources for this incredible saga, particularly in rabbinic literature. Mr. Alter fails to observe that the only witnesses to Masada, unlike the fall of Jerusalem three years earlier (in 70 C.E.), were the Romans themselves and two women and five children who escaped the self-immolation by hiding in underground caverns. Josephus was not a witness and must have received his information from either the Romans or Jewish survivors. Considering that a good deal of what Josephus wrote in his account is actually confirmed by Yadin's findings, why should he not be believed on an issue which cannot be confirmed by the extant evidence? The fall of Masada marked the end of Jewish resistance to the downfall of independent Judea. It was not an event of religious importance like the fall of Jerusalem, which possibly explains its not being mentioned in rabbinic literature. As Mr. Alter himself observes, the Zealots were considered fanatic dissidents by mainstream Judaism and their ordeal at Masada would therefore have been ignored in rabbinic literature. The Romans themselves would have no interest in propagating the story of Masada. . . .

Mr. Alter makes unflattering references to the fact that the 960 Zealots, or Sicarii, preferred suicide to surrender to the Roman legions besieging Masada. "Unlike the 960 under the command of ben Ya'ir, the Warsaw Ghetto fighters knew that every one of them faced certain extinction, and yet their response was to fight to the end of their lives, not to seek to deprive the enemy of his satisfaction in that all-too-Roman gesture of self-slaughter." I do not mean to belittle the heroism of the Warsaw Ghetto fighters, who deserve the greatest commendation, but Mr. Alter's deprecatory reference to the Masada resistance fighters is a complete distortion of what did happen. It was not a question of choosing between death and life as Mr. Alter claims. There was really no choice at all. The Romans had besieged Masada with a large force of perhaps 15,000 men under their commander, Flavius Silva, and once inside the fortress the troops would have certainly killed most of the defenders anyhow and carried the few survivors of the bloodbath off to Rome as slaves. The fate that would have befallen ben Ya'ir's courageous band, had they surrendered, was well known to them. The Romans had already slaughtered hundreds of thousands of their countrymen in their campaign throughout Judea to quell the Jewish revolt which had flared in the year 66 C.E. The last resisting rebels could not expect to fare much better, especially at the hands of Roman troops and mercenaries hungry for spoil.

Mr. Alter does not seem to be aware of the fact that the Masada defenders did offer strong resistance to Silva's legions. It took a long, strenuous effort and a favorable wind spreading fire to breach the fortress. The Zealots defended the fortress to the very end. It was only when the situation became hopeless that they preferred suicide to a surrender which in reality would have meant death. . . .

Howard Grief

Montreal, Canada

To the Editor of Commentary:

"The Masada Complex" may well assist the Israelis in meeting an immediate and dangerous external threat to their existence. There is, however, another important lesson to be learned from the Masada experience. . . . Eleazar ben Ya'ir escaped to Masada with a band of Zealots who survived the slaughter which followed the death of the Zealot leader Menahem at the hands of the priestly party. He and his group played virtually no further role in the Great Revolt until, following the reduction of Jerusalem, the Romans moved on Masada. Masada was doomed by the decision of Eleazar to isolate himself from the main effort of the Revolt in Jerusalem. . . . One may marvel at the nobility of a decision to commit mass suicide rather than submit to the yoke of Rome. It was, though, a direct consequence of the ideological differences, factional strife, and internal dissension which plagued the Great Revolt and contributed so heavily to its failure. Modern Israel would do well to ponder that sobering aspect of an

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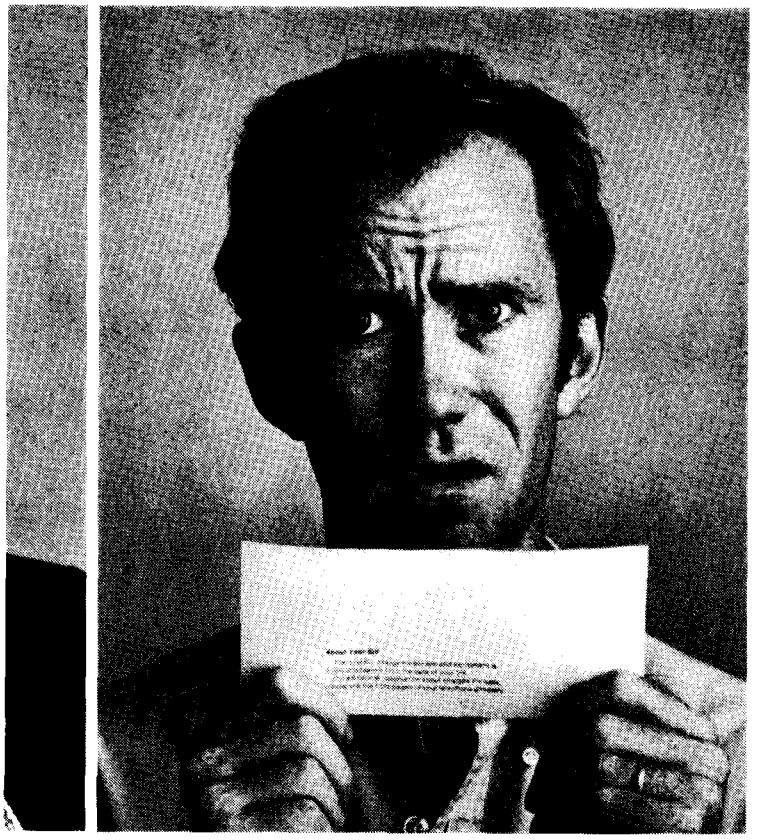

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episode in the history of the Jewish people of which the fall of Masada was but one minor part.

JULES HARRIS
Ottawa, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Masada Complex" Robert Alter performs a delicate tightrope walk. On the one hand, he sympathizes with Stewart Alsop in the latter's recent rugged exchange with Golda Meir concerning the Masada complex; at the same time, he seeks to avoid the pitfalls of the intellectuals' "even-handed" appeal for peace in the Middle East, published recently in the *New York Review of Books*, and he quite correctly points to the distortions of recent history committed by this "distinguished international group of intellectuals."

Without taking the space here to follow the tortuous path of Mr. Alter's reasoning, let us simply indicate that whatever may be the cause of his malaise, it leads him not to the misrepresentation of the facts about past events (which is an important topic in his theme), but to a falsification of the account of present political realities in the Middle East. Thus, he says, "one sympathizes with Alsop when he questions the long-term wisdom of [Israel's] repeatedly rejecting out of hand the possibility of negotiation because of mistrust, however the mistrust may have been conditioned by recurrent historical trauma." Now what is the basis for this fantastical notion of Israel's rejection of the possibility of negotiation? It is Alsop's not too amazing revelation (in his *Newsweek* column) that early this year "Anwar Sadat conveyed to Nixon and Kissinger, through his foreign affairs adviser, Hafez Ismail, an expression of willingness to enter an interim agreement involving the reopening of the Suez Canal provided Israel would agree to discuss evacuation of the whole Sinai."

Now really this is old stuff. Long before Ismail came to Washington, it was Egypt's announced position that she would not negotiate an interim agreement unless Israel committed herself in *advance* to an eventual withdrawal from all of occupied Sinai and Gaza. And Israel's position has been, rightly or wrongly, that to commit herself to complete withdrawal would leave nothing for negotiation. There was no occasion for Golda Meir "to respond suspiciously to this admittedly limited overture." For Israel's response has been on the record for a long time—the extent of withdrawal is the very topic of negotiation, and no withdrawal (partial or total) before negotiation means (in part) no withdrawal before acceptance of her existence.

Ismail's message to Washington was no "limited overture." It begged the whole question of the "impasse" that exists in the Middle East, despite the soft phraseology as reported (or dreamed up) by Alsop. For Israel to "agree to discuss evacuation of the whole Sinai" means for her to commit herself in advance to total withdrawal, which even the celebrated UN Resolution 242 does not require. . . .

JOSEPH NEYER
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an admirer of Robert Alter's writing on modern Hebrew literature, I would like to register certain observations with regard to his reading of Yitzhak Lamdan's epic poem, *Masada*. . . . First of all, the reader of Mr. Alter's "The Masada Complex" might be led to believe that the mood of the poem is all bleak. This is not so. The entire third section is a triumphant life-affirming proclamation, which reaches its thrilling climax in a *hora* that also simultaneously summons forth imagery of the Hasidic dance. If the new dance, as well as the old, is on "the edge of a precipice," I still feel it is one of unmistakable optimism, a kind of "fiddler-on-the-roof" mentality now transferred to the rugged Palestine setting. Mr. Alter quotes only from the first section of the poem. The third is entirely different, as indeed are the concluding sections of the poem. . . . The greatness of Lamdan's *Masada* lies in its ability to capture all the moods of the pioneering generation (primarily of the Third Aliyah), not only the mood of the desperate escapee from pogroms, although this mood is certainly prominent in the poem (and I think not yet obsolescent even as a mirror of today's reality).

This leads me to the second point. The reader should be aware that the "last-ditch fight" in Lamdan's *Masada* is not against hostile Arab neighbors, nor is it a specifically military fight in any way. (There are only fleeting, totally unmilitaristic references to Eleazar

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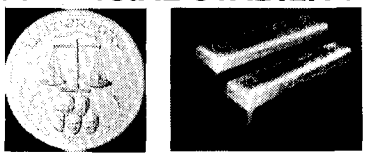

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When the news of the beloved Count's marriage to a dark-skinned woman reached the people, they were dismayed. And when he brought her home, they turned their backs on her. Why couldn't he have married one of his own kind?

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She was really a very kind woman, and, like her husband, treated the people well. Slowly, they began to accept her. And they learned to love her as much as they had the Count.

Later, when she died, they all came to her funeral to honor her.

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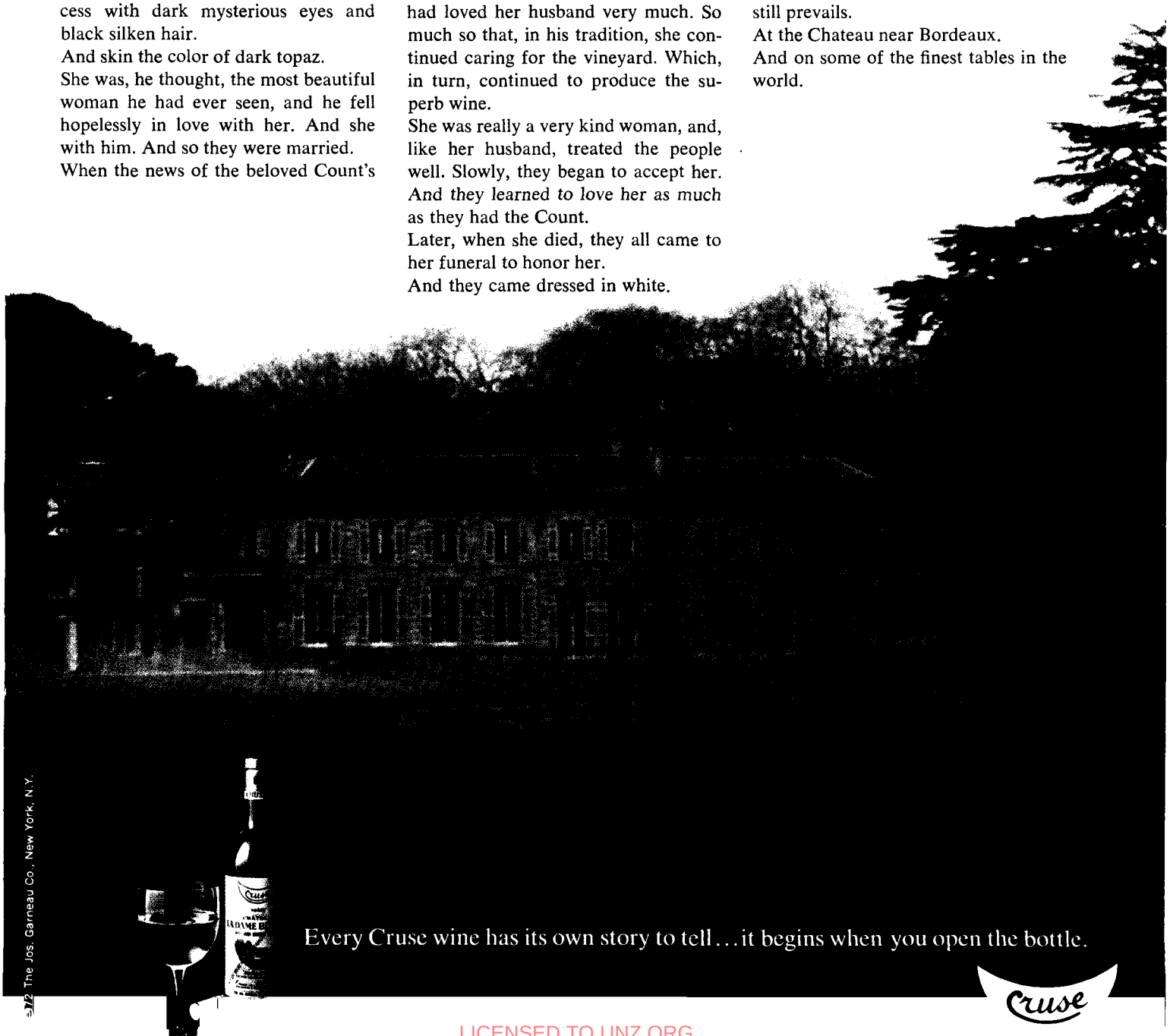

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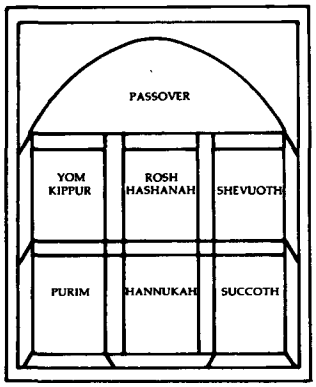

THE HOLIDAYS is typical of Harry Lieberman's joyous treatment of religious themes as he charmingly crowds a lifetime into a single picture, vibrant with color. Naive yet sophisticated, the overall effect can be likened to a Hasidic combination of biblical literalness and inspired symbolism. A faint nostalgia for the teachings of childhood and its lost innocence permeates the entire group despite its paradoxical appearance of stained glass panels in a wood frame.

Harry Lieberman's own life is as fascinating as his paintings, which win high critical praise wherever they are shown. Although he started his painting career late (at the age of 78) and as a primitive, there is nothing amateurish about his work. In fact, the richness of the color and detail in his interpretations of Biblical themes imbue them with great vitality and warmth.

Born in a typical *shtetl*, Gnieveshev, pop. 500, near Warsaw, nephew of the village Rabbi, Harry Lieberman followed the Hasidic Sect of Mystic Ecstasy founded by the Baal-Shem-Tov. He came to this country in 1906 and worked at first as a clothing cutter on the lower East Side of New York. The confectionary business beckoned next, and the one he and his wife started grew and prospered until he retired to Great Neck, New York, in 1950. There his primary interest was chess but, when his chess partner fell ill—Harry Lieberman turned to painting.

Now in his nineties, he is still exhibiting his work in both one-man and group exhibitions; and it is collected both here and abroad by museums, individuals, and institutions.

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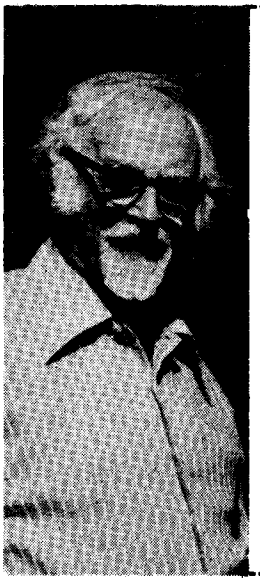

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ben Ya'ir and Trumpeldor.) The "fight" is mainly with the environment and with oneself. *Masada* is first and foremost a pioneering poem and a poem about pioneers. . . .

STANLEY NASH

Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Robert Alter's article is a provocative statement about the distorting impact of the poetic imagination on politics, made somewhat more interesting by the very fact that he is from the literary culture. I agree with Mr. Alter about the "Masada Complex." However, I do think that, because he does not sufficiently qualify his principle at the beginning, he gets into a little trouble at the end. After suggesting that myths distort the political process, Mr. Alter recognizes that Israel owes its very existence to the driving power of myth. He calls this a "paradox." Presumably, there is a "paradox" because he does not believe that Israel is a distortion. But if one gives his basic argument its broadest sweep, the paradox disappears: given its origins, Israel itself must be seen as a distortion in the Middle East, and the turmoil which followed Israel's founding must be viewed as another example of the havoc that comes when myths improperly intrude upon political realities.

The "paradox" can be eliminated more happily by qualifying the basic principle that the poetic imagination distorts the political process. (Mr. Alter may be suggesting this in his last paragraph.) While the poetic imagination can badly distort the political life, it can also give politics direction. Literature and the poetic imagination can help to meet the classic problem of how to infuse *ideals and values* into the "rigorously empirical" universe of politics. In the last decade, especially in the area of foreign policy, we have had enough of the politician as technician—a Bundy or McNamara who "nonchalant[ly]" "search[es] out" events for their "qualifying components" and proposes "practical options of responding to them." One need not believe that the poets should take over the government to believe that the technocrat lacking vision and ideals is also ill-suited for political leadership. . . .

PAUL D. GEWIRTZ

Washington, D.C.

ROBERT ALTER writes:

As to the historical issue, the very multiplicity of views in the letters on this question suggests precisely what I was contending—that we don't really know what happened at Masada. William Burstein, Hubert Catchpole, Howard Grief, and Jules Harris offer a variety of interesting assertions ranging from dubious to undemonstrable. If Trude Weiss-Rosmarin's objections to Yadin are not entirely unanswerable, they surely have not been answered here, least of all by Mr. Grief, who believes implicitly in all of Yadin's leaps of inference.

On the political issue, I was careful in my article not to presume to know whether Hafez Ismail's visit to Washington had really opened any small chink toward the possibility of meaningful negotiations. My argument, Joseph Neyer must surely see, was a more general one, that Israel's overall diplomatic posture has not reflected any substantial attempt to move beyond the status quo. This has been even more evident vis-à-vis Hussein, who has evinced some readiness to make concessions, than vis-à-vis Sadat. Again, criticism within Israel itself has repeatedly noted just this point.

As to the literary issue, Stanley Nash is of course correct that I did not mention the affirmation in the concluding lines of Lamdan's poem, but I think that what was really relevant to the argument of my article was the atmosphere of apocalyptic crisis that surely pervades the poem. Mr. Nash aptly describes the dance in the poem as a *hora* on the brink of a precipice, but that very description makes his notion of a "fiddler-on-the-roof" mentality in Lamdan's work patently absurd. Some contemporary critics of the poem in Palestine of the 20's (like Shlomo Tzemah) objected to it precisely because of its bleakness, because it did not adequately represent "all the moods" of the pioneers. Also, it seems to me a little facile to explain the imagery of desperate siege solely as the symbol of a pacific struggle of the *halutz* with his own nature and with the new environment. After all, the poem repeatedly invokes the murderous events of recent

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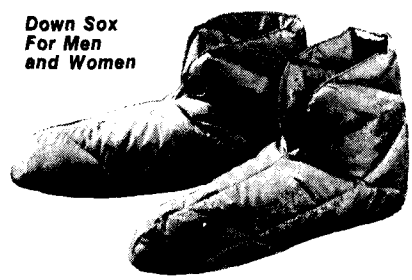

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Jewish history as the urgent background of the flight to Masada; it was written after the first great wave of pogroms carried out against the Zionists by Palestinian Arabs; and it is suffused with imagery of blood, wounds, and violence.

I am grateful to Paul D. Gewirtz for the thoughtfulness of his proposed qualification to my thesis. I hope I am right in assuming he uses "distortion" in a neutral, not pejorative, sense when he describes Israel as a "distortion in the Middle East," though in any case the term would require some complicated historical explanation.

"An American Family"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Sara Sanborn's article on the Loud family ["An American Family," May] is thoughtful, reasonable, and provocative. . . . Undoubtedly the documentary has been fair game for magazine writers. But even casual viewers, mostly women, since this is essentially a woman-oriented series, must have been aware of the maneuvering and manipulating of the events involved. . . . The women who watched the series know that life is unkempt, with its loose ends, ravelled edges, split seams—that every meal has its garbage tax, every soiled piece of laundry its trip to the tub. The very logistics of super-marketing for that brood *and* the three dogs and a cat or two are staggering. The shot of the uptight mother marching down each aisle grabbing one of everything from each shelf without any reference to a market list —who needs one?—stuffing all mechanically into the shopping cart was a scene of comic realism that no woman could forget, nor could she fail to picture in her own mind the return home with its stowing of all those goodies into their appropriate cupboards, drawers, cubby-holes, closets, freezers, refrigerators, etc. and the slashing of all those cans, cartons, bags, bottles, wax paper, cellophane, plastics, etc. etc., and then finally the disposing of all that debris. . . . Women looked beyond Pat Loud's taut face and recognized a woman with troubles. And they empathized with her husband-troubles and her troubles with the children. . . . And while they could overlook the resemblances to TV commercials and the camera clichés which Miss Sanborn dwells on . . . what really made them "edgy" . . . was the embarrassing emphasis on Lance Loud's homosexual lifestyle. This was milked to a degree that was disconcerting to most viewers who found it grotesque, phony, and ultimately damaging to the boy. Why didn't they show some vignettes of the younger brother visiting the mines in Australia? Enough money was spent on the series to have arranged that. . . . Scenes of Kevin, the straight brother, would have balanced the overtly-manipulated episodes involving Lance in Paris. . . . But the wholesome has always been less interesting than the decadent. So Lance became the junior star of the show.

Which brings me to Miss Sanborn's comments on producer Craig Gilbert's statement that Ross Macdonald's *The Underground Man* "described with absolute accuracy the kind of family I was looking for." Although I have read almost all the articles on the series, I was unaware of this fact. Having now read the novel, I can understand the motives behind Gilbert's treatment, and I can only say that before the first camera rolled the damage to the Louds had already begun. And a decent family was used, or rather misused, indecently. But I don't think the fact that the divorce erupted during the course of the filming can be blamed on the producer. The filming acted as a catalytic agent which brought to the surface emotions which had been germinating for over five years. . . . The break-up seems to have been inevitable. . . .

As for the Louds: they have been presented with all the unused film, roughly twenty-four times the number of hours edited for the TV screen. . . . On many programs and in articles they have spoken of all the "happy moments" filmed, then snipped away to fall unseen on the cutting-room floor. Why not give American viewers an hour or two of this bonanza? The Loud Gospel according to the Louds. . . .

F. M. CONN
Sacramento, California

SARA SANBORN writes:

I thank F. M. Conn for her kind remarks and agree about the effects of "milking" Lance Loud's doings. I noted in my article that the children were featured in accordance with their entertainment value, but I can't agree that this unseemliness would have been eased by showing Kevin's trip. A self-

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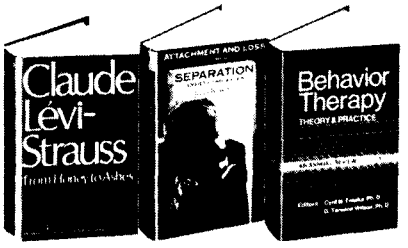

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conscious balancing of the straight and gay brothers' travels would only have made explicit conventionalisms that were already obtrusive. Delilah and Michele with her horse were used for the wholesome touches.

Pat Loud surely had problems, since she wound up divorced, and it would be absurd to pretend that we never see the "real" Pat. The difficulty is knowing when we are seeing her. The clichés seem to me the essential point and problem—not only the clichés of the producers, but those of the actors. To some extent—how great an extent is an abiding cultural question—we have learned from the media how to play ourselves. (A memorable treatment of this whole issue is *The Image-Makers*, by Daniel Boorstin.) On the *Dick Cavett Show*, referring to the powerful episode in which she confessed her marital problems to her brother, Pat Loud said ironically, "That was my best scene." Her husband replied supportively, "That was a very sincere scene."

Mobilizing the Middle

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The two recent articles by Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon ["Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric," April]—pointing up that some progress against poverty has occurred, but more is needed—and Aaron Wildavsky ["Government and the People," August]—pointing up quite well the contradictions between various liberal policies—are long overdue. I would like to comment on the political reality behind their analyses.

In my view, the basic political problem in post-New Deal liberalism has been to convince a relatively affluent majority to help a non-affluent minority; no longer could liberals depend on implementing policies which clearly help the majority (such as legitimizing unions and implementing social security). Instead, in order to implement programs to help the minority, an appeal must be made to Middle America for political acceptance. If such an appeal is successful, a program could be implemented, since Middle America plus the poor make up a majority. If such an appeal is unsuccessful, a program will not be implemented, since Middle America plus conservatives also make up a majority.

Thus the key political problem is how to achieve Middle America's support for programs to assist the non-affluent minority. Messrs. Scammon and Wattenberg first pointed out the effect of the proper rhetoric in their 1970 work: in effect, they said, do not abuse middle-class values such as the family, but state instead that higher welfare payments or special programs to the poor will strengthen family life. The capture of the liberal movement by the New Left (or, at any rate, the heavy infiltration) during the middle 60's represented a repudiation of Messrs. Scammon and Wattenberg's sound political advice. Thus, we had academics and leftists calling for a glorification of the "poverty culture," a justification of disruptive activities by the "people," the use of the term "demands" for political programs.

This is not the way to approach Middle America (whether one likes it or not) as Richard Nixon knew so well. Recently, we have seen another development exemplified by the letters responding to the Scammon-Wattenberg article [Letters from Readers, August]: the liberal programs of the 60's have failed. Aside from the obvious nonsense involved (Is it better to give a young poor person a Neighborhood Youth Corps job or not to give him one? Is it better to raise welfare payments somewhat or leave them as they are?), this posture clearly turns off Middle America. If the programs are failing, the hypothetical machinist's wife from Dayton will say, it is rather silly to fund them. What the academic or New Leftist is really saying is that the programs have not done enough, or have failed to achieve their goals, or could be better formulated; what the machinist's wife hears is that the programs are doing no one any good. Understandably—and rationally—she questions the expenditure of her tax funds.

Mr. Wildavsky raises another key point: that it is some of the new liberal ideas—particularly the demand for participation, the lack of realization of the trade-off between "creaming" and cost in manpower programs, etc.—which have made the implementation of new programs difficult. Even such simple things as having a program to provide high-school education for adults in low-income areas runs up against all kinds of unbelievable (in terms of ten years ago) objections: Will the teachers live in the

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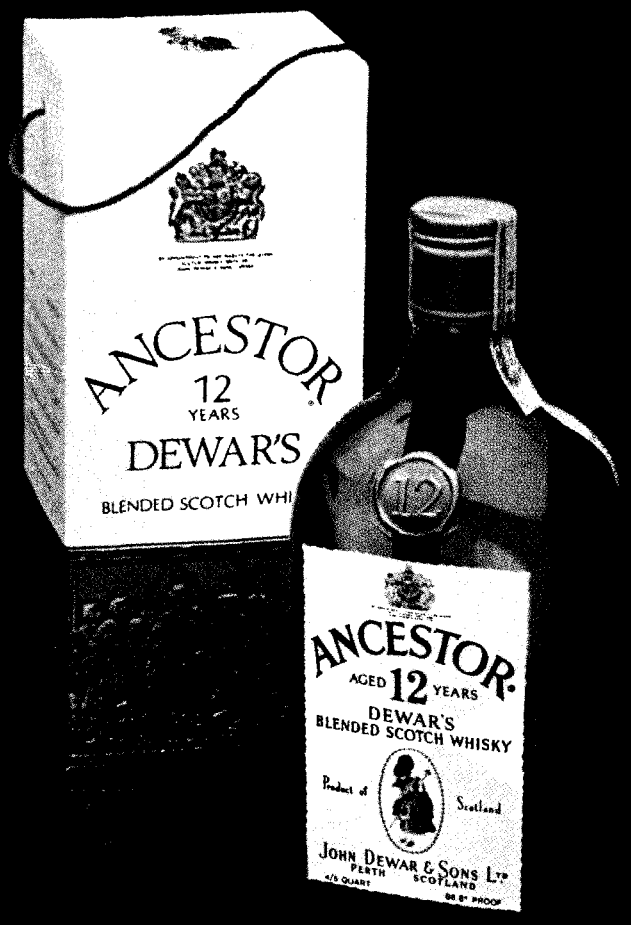

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neighborhood? Will they be black (more recently, female)? Who will choose the teachers? Whose building will be leased? Who decided to have a high-school education program? More recently, scholars question whether a high-school degree is worthwhile or not (although few probably urge their own child to quit high school). All of these may or may not be valid goals—but we should realize, as Mr. Wildavsky pointed out, that the raising of these objections certainly complicates the basic goal: giving people high-school degrees.

To appeal to Middle America, and reconstitute a coalition for a reformist majority, we must a) acknowledge that some things have worked, and that more is needed; b) eschew political slogans that, however appealing to the liberated young, turn off their elders; and c) exercise a little common sense about what is politically workable at this time. If this agenda is met, we may actually bring about more improvement in the lives of individuals in meaningful terms, not in terms of what the current fashionable version of utopia is. That is what we all started to do back in the middle 60's and what we have had some success in achieving; it would be nice if a pragmatic program of appealing to both Middle America and meeting the needs of the non-affluent minority could be put together by the 200th anniversary of our nation.

DEMPSTER K. HOLLAND
Center for Urban Programs
St. Louis University
St. Louis, Missouri

Encounter Groups

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I find myself in an intense love-hate relationship with the article by Alan L. Mintz, "Encounter Groups and Other Panaceas" [July]. I love it because it is an exquisitely well-written and enlighteningly precise exposé of the reductionistic tendencies within the movement which I prefer to call "feeling therapies." I hate it because it is a dissection, written out of an ignorance of what the talk about feelings is about. Mr. Mintz may well have pinned down the popular versions, but in doing so he has leveled out all that is worthwhile and that deserves, at the very least, to remain an issue. He certainly does not understand what goes on in the groups I have been in.

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Jacques Lipchitz was the last survivor of the grand avant-garde of modern art, the last link with the heroic cubist period of the School of Paris. A friend of Picasso, Braque, Modigliani, and Le Corbusier, his death in May of this year at the age of 82 brought to a close the era in which they effectively revised the twentieth-century image.

Yet if Jacques Lipchitz was one of the first to apply the principles of cubist form to sculpture—and if, as he said of himself, he was "always a cubist"—it is in another sense that he finally commanded international attention. Cubism had always been an art of heroic form rather than of heroic themes. Lipchitz, turning his attention to the grand subjects of mythology and the Bible, forged a style that could accommodate such material. In some ways he ceased to be a modern artist. Working within an emotional climate that recalled the great efforts of Michelangelo and Rodin, he created monumental works that transcended our own time. In so doing he set aside his youthful experiments in favor of an art that would be capable of sustaining his own mature passion and eloquence.

The central figure of Jacques Lipchitz' mythology was Prometheus—who stole fire from the gods and brought it to mankind. Zeus punished Prometheus by chaining him to Mt. Caucasus, where a vulture fed upon his liver until Heracles—with the consent of Zeus—interceded and set him free. For Lipchitz, Prometheus symbolized the triumph of light over darkness, of education over ignorance, of the effective struggle for liberation in the face of arbitrary punishment and hardship. His interest in the figure apparently traces to 1931; but, with the Hitlerian threat of 1933, Prometheus took on new significance for him. By 1936, the Prometheus he created for the Paris World's Fair was not only chainless but had triumphed over the vulture.

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What disturbs me is this sensitive man's contentment to take groups at their worst; it seems he prefers to locate the simplistic, rather than take seriously the experiences which the *fad* of encounter blatantly corrupts. One point of the study which Mr. Mintz relies on for his objective devaluation of encounters—but fails to note—was that the quality of the leader made all the difference. Yet Mr. Mintz describes encounter as if it were a world without quality.

It is not unreasonable to assume that "feeling knowledge" cannot come from books, or from sitting in on a few sessions; in this respect, it is no different from a foundation of psychoanalytical knowledge. As a case against the encounter movement, Mr. Mintz's article is masterful. But inasmuch as it is content to take lowly parts for the whole, it is sophistry.

PAUL SUNSTEIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alan L. Mintz's article on encounter groups views the movement as a "historical religion." It may also be examined as politically and sociologically akin to the Leninist dogma of criticism and self-criticism as well as to the Maoist cultural-revolutionary brainwashing phenomenon. In the Russian and Chinese examples, the leaders of this conforming process are, to borrow from Orwell, more equal than the other "pigs." But the sensitivity-encounter-marathon procedure is even more subtle and insidious since the group sessions are often proclaimed to be leaderless and/or the authority roles are played down. With everyone participating on an equal footing, the manipulation by the "trainers," "coordinators," "facilitators," "convenors," or "consciousness-raisers" is slicker, since the victims are denied targets upon whom they can vent their rage should they later feel that they have been taken; the severe depression (and even suicidal thinking) which often follows upon these sessions, is a result of the internalization of rage as it frantically and vainly seeks an identifiable protagonist.

Ironically, the Birchers and ultra-conservatives have labeled the T-group movement a Communist, brainwashing technique. T-group proponents Gottschalk and Davidson *(Sensitivity through Encounter and Marathon,* Aronson Press, 1972) disagree: "The result of brainwashing is distrust, defensiveness, isolation, and lack of empathy. The result of sensitivity training is increased trust, openness, a sense of belonging, and empathy." Shades of Orwellian NewSpeak.

Mr. Mintz also notes that "attack" techniques have been taken over completely by the drug-free "therapeutic communities" like Synanon and Daytop. This phenomenon needs to be researched, especially since alcoholism, also classified psycho-pharmacologically as an addictive depressant, has been treated with some measure of success by Alcoholics Anonymous, an organization which espouses a philosophy of tolerance and a technique of great individual support. . . . The highly regimented Synanon addict, like his Russian and Chinese counterparts as well as the "self-actualized" marathon participant, is rendered obedient by this dehumanizing "attack." In turn, like Anna Freud's victims of aggression, the victims "identify with the aggressor" and attack others in their groups to ward off further attacks. . . .

Finally, I am amazed that so many intelligent and sophisticated people reveal their innermost thoughts and secrets in front of total strangers. In letting it "all hang out," who knows how many participants have been spied upon by various government agents and buggers?

SHELDON C. SELLER
Department of Sociology
Queens College
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alan L. Mintz does a fairly good job of exposing encounter groups for what they are: pitiful attempts by modern man to satisfy his "instinctoid" need for communal security and thus complete the achievement of personal security, strength, and "health." But, Mr. Mintz could have done a really devastating job on these fads if he had had more understanding of Abraham Maslow's thought. . . .

A brief look at chapter eleven in Maslow's *Motivation and Personality* and chapter twenty-three in *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* quickly reveals how far off-course most of Maslow's "followers" are. For one thing, Maslow never glorified spontaneity *per se,* but was interested in the spontaneity of self-actualizing individuals.

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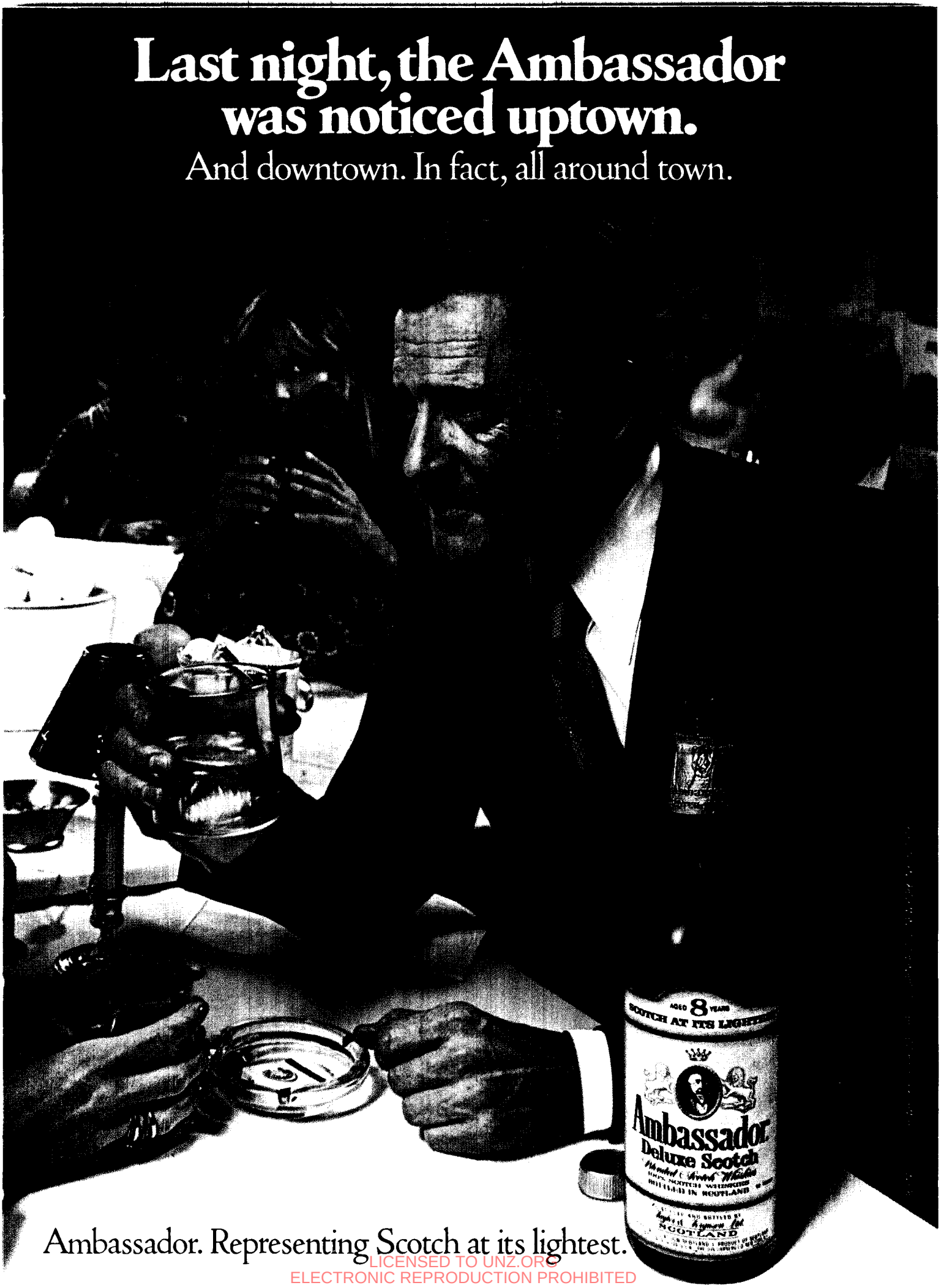

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Also, I think that Mr. Mintz will discover that Maslow's ideal, the self-actualizing personality (which Maslow himself insists is very rare) is both cognitively and affectively committed to rationality; realistically accepting of the inevitable "agony and suffering" that goes with this world; and autonomously committed to the "primacy of the society of man."

This last commitment, in fact, rather than encounter groups, is what gives Maslow's ideal man his authentic communal security. "Change comes from within," individualism doesn't have to be "rugged," and it can be dedicated to the "common good." . . .

J. R. Piers Woodriff
Somerset, Virginia

To the Editor of Commentary:

I join Alan L. Mintz in his concern about the processes and goals of the "encounter movement"—particularly when the encounter experience is promoted as an end in itself. I take exception, however, to his lumping Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Frederick Perls with those who do so promote it. Although the proponents of "encountering" may claim discipleship, none of the three has, either in his writings or in his personal presentations, accorded legitimacy to such claims.

The claims are especially ironic in the case of Perls who, in the last two years of his life, declared open war on the "instant turner-oners" whom he considered worse than charlatans. He felt so strongly about the issue that he left Esalen . . . to get away from the "instant joy makers" who had taken over and tried hard to find a place where his final (unfinished, sad to relate) dream of establishing a "Gestalt kibbutz" could be made reality.

It was Perls's view that the process of encounter could be one of many possible *first* steps in the arduous and central task of therapy—that of shifting from environmental support to self-support. The kind of shallow and transient encounter-group experiences that Mr. Mintz decries are the same ones that Perls saw as perpetuating the myth that the individual was unable to stand on his own two feet. . . .

In support of the identification of Perls with the "encounter movement," Mr. Mintz twice misquotes Perls's aphorism, "Lose your mind and regain [sometimes, *come to*]

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your senses" as ". . . lose your mind and *become* your senses" (emphasis added). The latter form can certainly be read as an invitation to the kind of blind groping (no pun intended) for authenticity espoused by some of the more hedonistically oriented "encounter" leaders. It is also not what Perls said or intended. (To Mr. Mintz's partial credit, he acknowledges the second time around that his source is secondary, putting it into the mouth of "one of Perls's disciples.")

Finally, in an aside, Mr. Mintz asserts that Gestalt therapy and Gestalt psychology . . . are "related . . . in little more than name." He's quite wrong in this as he would have found if he had troubled to wade into Perls's earlier works. Perls took the central "Laws of Gestalt"—organismic holism, figure-bound formation, and closure—and incorporated them as integral parts of his conceptual framework. His genius was in seeing that not only were these laws applicable to perception, but that they encompassed the totality of behavior.

PINCUS GROSS
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alan L. Mintz's article makes some good points about problems with encounter-group therapies. In discussing this movement he has asked a crucial but often neglected question about its procedures: What are their effects? . . . After first noting that measurement of therapeutic effects is a vexing question, Mr. Mintz then quotes an evaluation based on a method of measurement that has been almost universally rejected as biased—asking clients if their behavior had changed after therapy. Such reports are often not related to observed changes, and even if changes occur, the client has no way of knowing whether the treatment, or what specific aspect of the treatment, was responsible. The behavior therapists have been particularly active in investigating the discrepancies between self-report and behavioral relationships.

I also disagree with Mr. Mintz's endorsement of psychoanalysis as a superior therapeutic technique. Encounter-group participants, he concludes, lack a "commitment to a long-term, continuous struggle in which cathartic breakthroughs might be consolidated by the hard work of interpretation and analysis." Let me repeat Mr. Mintz's question in regard to psychoanalysis: What is the evidence for the effectiveness of this venerable system of therapy? Not much. In one of his recent extensive reviews of therapeutic-outcome studies, Allan Bergin writes: "Taking all the above problems [of research design] into account, there remains some modest evidence that psychotherapy 'works.' While most studies do not seem to yield very substantial evidence that this is so, the number that do seem to be clearly larger than would be expected by chance." He also states that "the weakness of the average effect implies that only some methods or some therapies are especially effective. It would be a task of high priority, therefore, assiduously to isolate and define those persons and methods that are most effective." The studies Bergin reviews include therapeutic techniques other than psychoanalysis and the results for this therapy are in fact in no way outstanding.

If neither encounter groups nor psychoanalysis has been shown to be particularly effective, what follows? First, practitioners need more than the uncontrolled observations of their clients' words and behavior as evidence that their techniques are beneficial—sound research is also required. Second, the effectiveness of a therapy cannot be assumed, no matter how widespread its advocacy or how compelling its rhetoric. . . .

BRADLEY BUCHER
Department of Psychology
The University of Western Ontario
London, Canada

ALAN L. MINTZ writes:

Aside from Paul Sunstein, none of the respondents writes to defend encounter groups; rather, they seem particularly anxious to dissociate their teachers from the phenomenon. At the core of Mr. Sunstein's remarks I find two demurrals. First, he records his own positive experiences in encounter groups, experiences apparently unmarred by the excesses I described. This is news I am glad to hear and I hope that there are many such reports from other intelligent people. Second, he makes a plea for a kind of "feeling knowledge" which he feels I obviously did not display in my article. Talk about affective cognition and its superiority to the "rationalistic" modes of the West is a central theme in the *Kulturkampf* between the counter-culture and its critics. Although this formulation of the issues is obviously skewed, the controversy itself is certainly important to the state of our culture. In this particular instance, however, Mr. Sunstein uses the fact that I wrote about encounter as an observer and not as a committed insider as a way of disqualifying my conclusions. If the issues were engaged directly there would be a great deal to talk about; as it is, there is little encouragement to join the debate when one's comments by their very nature could never approach the truth.

I am grateful to Sheldon Seller for taking my argument along different lines and extending it to consider its more sinister political implications. His proposals for researching the results of attack therapies seem particularly useful.

To J. R. Piers Woodruff: Although Maslow did not live to observe the later excesses of the encounter movement, he was particularly indiscriminate in espousing and advocating groups of this sort—so much so that he appended to his book *Toward a Psychology of Being* a descriptive list of about a hundred centers and institutes which he felt operated along lines similar to his ideas. A glance at the list indicates that he had little familiarity with most of the groups, and one must conclude that he was very free in identifying himself with anything that sounded like a practical application of his work. Maslow's naiveté extended also to his delineation of the "self-actualizing personality." By attributing to his construct all the good traits in the world, he simply eluded the problem of psychic economy; that is, by merely adding items to the list he backed away from working out significant contradictions, such as why self-absorption and communality usually are not found in the same person.

To Pincus Gross: If such was Perls's attitude, then I am happy to be made aware of it. The idea of a "Gestalt kibbutz," however, I find utterly horrifying in its conversion of a technique into a full-blown way of life. Far from being a "first step" this sounds much closer to the "end in itself" which you decry. In regard to the quotation about losing one's mind, it was taken from an article co-authored by Perls, and even if that were not the case, one would have every right,

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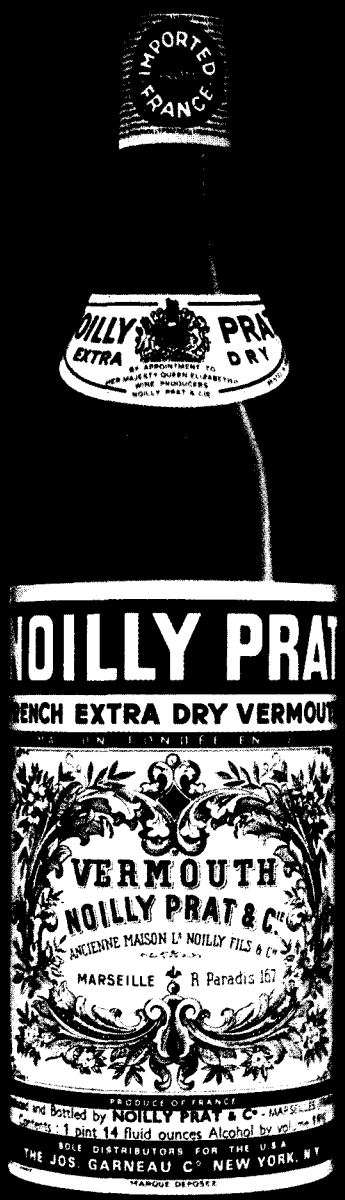
34 words on the Noilly Prat martini by W. Somerset Maugham.



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"Points of View", 1958

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on the basis of his other writings, to believe that this statement is *just* the kind of thing he would have said and meant.

To Bradley Bucher: If you read my article carefully, you will notice that the study in question, in addition to self-evaluation, is also based on reports of observed behavior filed by friends of the group participants.

Contemporary Prayer

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Graham's review of two new High Holiday prayer books [Books in Review, July] reaches a new low in accuracy and scope. This is particularly true of the Media Judaica publication, *A Contemporary High Holiday Service,* which has been known to me since it was used, as one of several texts, at our High Holiday services.

Although originally published as a service for college youth, it has achieved wide acclaim among hundreds of congregations and rabbis across the country for creativity and exciting format, including the use of graphics to illustrate prayers and readings. It is undoubtedly one of the most innovative contributions to Jewish liturgy in many years.

Edward Graham, instead of recognizing the nature of this creativity, aesthetic beauty, and substantive content, focuses on a few insignificant paragraphs and presumed mistransliterations and becomes completely lost in trivia. Alas, Mr. Graham's vision and breadth are simply no match for the depth, sensitivity, and understanding required, his language and grammatical precision notwithstanding. . . .

ELI M. BLACK

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Graham's review of *A Contemporary High Holiday Service,* which I edited with S. Allan Sugarman, contains a number of errors and distortions.

Mr. Graham writes that "The *Avot* prayer, which recurs often in the service, is translated only once. . . ." This is not true. In our prayer book, it is found three times and translated *twice* (cf. pp. 86-87 and p. 137).

Mr. Graham has an intriguing accusation concerning the *Alenu.* He charges that because this is "a text emphasizing the differences between the Jewish people and other peoples, and underscoring the unique Jewish destiny, [it] is not translated at all." The passage is in fact translated on page 160! This reveals both the bias and the carelessness with which the reviewer examined the volume.

Mr. Graham alleges that "Whenever the suspicion enters the editors' minds that a traditional prayer or Torah reading is saying something young people may not be interested in or might not like, they simply introduce some 'relevant and meaningful' material or—worse—deliberately mistranslate or altogether fail to translate the Hebrew text in question. Perhaps the prime casualty of this practice is that jewel of the liturgy, the *Kaddish,* a series of praises to God's greatness, goodness, and exaltedness, which appears a number of times in various forms throughout the service—all untranslated." The clear implication is that we shied away from prayers of praise to God because such prayers might not appeal to young people. This is utter nonsense. The mood of joyous exaltation and thanksgiving to God is felt on virtually every page. It is the dominant mood of our service, and to imply anything else is to raise the question of whether the critic actually read the volume.

There was nothing devious in our failure to translate the *Kaddish.* Our decision was influenced by the readily observable fact that at no public worship service is the *Kaddish* ever read in translation. (In several modern prayer books, the *Kaddish* is the only prayer found in transliteration.) In the 187 pages of our service we translated only those passages which we felt might be read publicly in translation. Thus we also did not translate *Yigdal* or *Adon Olam, Ayn Kelohaynu* or *Yishtabach,* the Torah or Haftarah blessings, etc. In each of these instances we were guided by our intimate familiarity with what actually happens at a synagogue service.

Mr. Graham further misrepresents the character of our prayer book when he sarcastically suggests that our use of "relevant and meaningful" (the quotation marks are his) material serves as a decoy to distract from our failure to translate uninteresting or unappealing prayers. The fact is that we have introduced supplementary material, pictorial and verbal, throughout the volume. It is this above all which justifies our use of "contemporary" in the book's title.

Mr. Graham takes us to task because we "choose deliberately to ignore the last line [of *Eil Adon*] with its specific reference to the supernatural *seraphim* and *ophanim.*" Since Mr. Graham himself admits that we did not translate *Eil Adon* but only paraphrased it (twelve Hebrew lines were rendered in five English lines), one wonders why he becomes so exercised over the omission of the *seraphim* and *ophanim.* Is that really what Mr. Graham thinks ought to be preserved in a modern paraphrase of this hymn? Moreover, even a cursory examination of our volume would have revealed that we are not at all intimidated by the "supernatural." On page 28, in a free poetic translation of the *Kedushah,* our first paragraph reads:

> *On earth, as in the heavens above,*
> *We sing praises to Your Name.*
> *And join the angels on high*
> *Your holiness to proclaim.*

Mr. Graham alleges that in the *Avot* prayer "the statement . . . that God revives the dead is fudged in favor of a more 'digestible' idea (i.e., one whose meaning is obscure enough to pass): 'You lovingly remember all Your creatures to life.'" It would appear that Mr. Graham's indignation interfered with his observation. Had he looked with any care at all he would have noticed that the sentence, "You lovingly remember all Your creatures to life" follows immediately after, "Who is like You, Father of Mercy?" Together, these two sentences are a translation of the Hebrew: "*Mee chamocha Av harachamim zochayr y'tsurov l'chayim b'rachamim.*" They have nothing whatever to do with the idea "that God revives the dead." We translate the phrase "*m'chayay hamaytim*" as "You grant everlasting life to the dead."

What is true about our prayer book is that every time we encounter the *Alenu* we emphasize a different aspect of it and highlight another of the several themes contained in or suggested by the traditional prayer. Thus we hope to avoid monotony while revealing the multifaceted character of the prayer.

Mr. Graham charges that "whatever in the prayers is particularis-

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tic . . . is softpedaled, mistranslated, or omitted entirely." I leave it to your readers to judge whether our prayer book can be accused of softpedaling the "particularistic" themes of the prayer book when, in a 187-page volume which is, by design, selective, we include such passages as:

a) Merciful Father, deal kindly with Zion and Jerusalem.
b) Grant glory to Your people Israel, joy to its land, gladness to Your city Jerusalem.
c) He brought forth our ancestors from Egypt.
d) As You saved our people from the tyrant's hands.
e) We praise You, O God, Redeemer of Israel.
f) Remember the virtuous deeds of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember the covenant made with our ancestors. . . .

Can a prayer book be accused of "softpedaling" the particularistic in the *Mahzor* when it adds pictures of: bearded Jews at study, Jews of all ages at the Western Wall, Golda Meir weeping at the grave of an Israeli soldier, shelves of Hebrew books, *arba kanfot* hanging from a line, etc.? The traditional prayer, "May a new light shine upon Zion" is accompanied in our book by the poem "Israel" by Karl Shapiro and by the following passage written by me:

For the Jew, Israel
is a state of mind
It is not only a piece
of geography.
It is history.
It is theology.
It is memory.
It is Jewish tears and
Jewish triumphs.
It is Jewish anguish
and Jewish ecstasy.
It is childhood legends
and Biblical verses.
It is the direction that
we pray and the subject
of our prayers.
It is exile and homecoming.
It is a burning Temple
and a new flag at the
United Nations.
It is Tisha B'Av and Yom
Ha-Atzmaut,
It is a people restored
and hope reborn.

Do these lines reveal a mentality allergic to the "particularistic" in Judaism?

Another dimension of the prayer book which we have allegedly "softpedaled, mistranslated, or

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omitted entirely" is "whatever emphasizes . . . God's holiness." When the theme of God's holiness is encountered for the first time in the *Shacharit* service we have *added* four pages . . . illustrating this concept!

Mr. Graham, trying to establish "a pattern" of allergy to the particularistic element in Judaism, cites only one illustration from among the dozens of supplementary sources used in our prayer book. He chooses a passage by the Beatles. One would not suspect from his review that we also included material from Bialik, Abraham J. Heschel, Mordecai M. Kaplan, Rabbi Tarphon, the Kotzker Rebbe, Aaron Zeitlin, and many other Jewish sources. . . . Nor does Mr. Graham give the slightest intimation that we have added pages of Holocaust material which underscores the uniqueness of Jewish history and destiny as no ancient prayer could.

Mr. Graham issues the severe verdict that "the high-minded young people for whom this prayer book has been created . . . are getting something less than the truth" from its editors. I leave it to the readers of this letter to place a copy of our prayer book alongside his review and then determine which of us gave our readers "something less than the truth."

(Rabbi) SIDNEY GREENBERG
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Graham's review . . . was so commendably out of step with trendy thinking that I had to let you know how much I liked it. Ironically, the political religion Sidney Greenberg and S. Allan Sugarman profess is itself falling out of style (and to be unstylish is to be dead for the trendy set!). Having gotten nowhere on the crest of a thousand secular movements, the people to whom the book is directed may yet discover the God of Israel, who judges them for their sins and does not just commend them for their liberalism. Mr. Graham's insistence that the doctrine of *t'chiyat ha-maytim* (resurrection of the dead) not be evaded is all the more courageous in light of the rarity of rabbis who will enunciate and defend this most illiberal point of Jewish faith. . . .

JON LEVENSON
Somerville, Massachusetts

EDWARD GRAHAM writes:

Eli Black implies that "wide acclaim among hundreds of congregations and rabbis" is proof of the virtues of *A Contemporary High Holiday Service*; a visit to the remainder bookshops might remind him of countless other books that have been similarly "acclaimed." Mr. Black uses the words "innovative" and "creativity" as if they were variations of the ineffable Name. Some innovations and creations—let it often be said—ought never to leave the drawing board. As for the "insignificant paragraphs" to which Mr. Black refers, what are *they* doing in so innovative and creative a prayer book?

Rabbi Greenberg has caught me out in two points of fact. I plead guilty—though these particular factual errors do little or nothing to weaken my central objections.

Rabbi Greenberg argues that the failure to translate the *Kaddish* and certain other passages results from a decision to render "only those passages which we felt might be read publicly in translation." But surely a contemporary Jewish worshiper, reciting a *Kaddish* or listening to a *Mimkomcha, must* be helped to understand what he is saying or hearing. Or is Rabbi Greenberg recommending incantation as a substitute for understanding? Besides, the list of untranslated or mistranslated pieces is very suspiciously weighted with texts that emphasize holiness, particularism, supernaturalism, and sacrifices.

I believe that Rabbi Greenberg's argument is disingenuous and that there is another unspoken reason for these omissions and for many of the mistranslations as well, i.e., that they contain statements the editors find unacceptable and that they feel might be unacceptable to large numbers of this prayer book's potential users. For example, just what does the untranslated Torah *b'racha* on page 39 mean? I would venture to guess that some of those potential users might not consciously recite a blessing announcing that God chose Israel from among all peoples to give us His Law; that some would object to the ideas obscured in the translation of *Eilu D'vorim* (p. 9), a prayer whose Hebrew text instructs us to dower the bride and to perform other worthy deeds in anticipation of the rewards we are to receive here and in the next world; that many would bridle at three specific references to God's people Israel buried in the Hebrew of the short prayer, *V'Ha'arev Na* (p. 9). Again, I don't want to argue theology, or public relations either; I do insist, however, that Hebrew words have meanings and that the editor/translator of a Hebrew prayer book is obligated to present those meanings honestly.

By way of dismissing my point that many of the contemporary pictorial and verbal materials serve as a "decoy" (his word) to lead the reader away from the traditional prayers they accompany, Rabbi Greenberg argues that such materials appear "*all through* the volume." Indeed they do so appear, and so too do they continually distract the reader *all through* the volume. My objection to the Beatles' piece and to so many of the other pop materials introduced is precisely that they do not explain or illuminate the prayers at hand. They serve instead, mistakenly and repeatedly, to suggest that the young reader's transient social, political, and personal views—as they are reflected and distorted by today's pop culture—are the very views that Jewish prayers have always espoused.

My Funk and Wagnalls defines *particularism* as "exclusive devotion to the interests of one's particular state, party, people, or religion." I thought and continue to think it a fine term to describe that special relationship—lovingly described and repeatedly recalled in traditional Jewish prayer—between God and His people Israel. It is a relationship that our detractors and many of our own people cannot abide. "Pictures of bearded Jews at study, Jews of all ages at the Western Wall, Golda Meir weeping at the grave of an Israeli soldier," etc. may well have a place in a prayer book that undertakes to present pictures, and so too may supplementary selections from ancient and modern Jewish sources have a place, but they are frequently ambiguous and inadequate substitutes for the many overt and clear statements (in the traditional prayers) of the love of God for His chosen people Israel that Greenberg and Sugarman have chosen to obscure. For those specific references to this relationship that have been permitted to stand clearly stated in the Hebrew *and* English, I hereby record my thanks.

Correction

In "The Conversion of the Jews," by Marshall Sklare [September], an error occurred on page 47, line 50. "In 1939 . . ." should read "In 1930 . . ."

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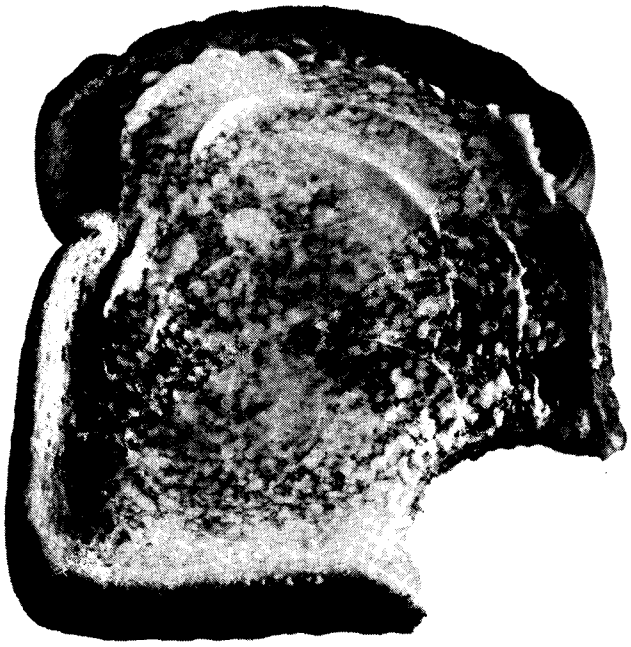

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Oil

Walter Laqueur and Edward Luttwak

THE idea of using oil as a political weapon against "imperialism" and Israel is not new to the Arab world. Radical Arabs have advocated such a course for many years, but recently threats to starve the West into submission and ultimately to destroy it have been gathering momentum and have been attracting a great deal of publicity. Last May, Colonel Qaddafi of Libya spoke of oil as a "weapon of Arab self-defense." King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who had shown great care in the past not to mix oil and politics, has let it be known that his country will be unable to expand oil production beyond the present level unless Washington changes its policy toward Israel. And the Shah of Iran, during his recent visit to Washington, also tried to impress on the administration that a change in American policy toward Israel would make it much easier to safeguard a steady oil supply at reasonable prices.

In consequence of all this, pressure has already begun to be exerted on Israel and more will no doubt be forthcoming, perhaps even heavy pressure. Yet the truth is that if Israel gave in to all the Arab demands, or even if Israel ceased to exist altogether, the major oil producers would still not supply oil a cent cheaper, nor would they supply more than they think compatible with their best interests. In order to understand why this is so, and what it implies for the future, we have to examine the peculiar nature of the international oil business, as well as the politics of the oil-producing countries themselves.

I

IN theory, the three dimensions of the international oil business—economic, fiscal, and political—should intersect, but if they ever do, they rarely seem to produce a coherent result. Usually they simply do not add up. This is why one reputable oil economist, Professor M. A. Adelman of MIT, can proclaim that there is no oil shortage in sight but rather a vast surplus that will continue to 1985 and beyond, a surplus that should ensure virtual price stability; while an equally reputable expert, Walter J. Levy, can express great alarm about the price of future oil supplies and indeed about their absolute availability. Both are arguing from roughly the same set of facts, but each is looking at a different dimension of the oil business.

According to textbook economics, the size of fully proven oil reserves in the Persian Gulf, 367 billion barrels, should indeed, as Professor Adelman claims, result in a buyers' market with plentiful supplies. For even by 1985, worldwide imports from the Gulf are unlikely to exceed 15.5 billion barrels a year, including just under four billion barrels a year for the United States. In other words, even if it is assumed that not one additional barrel of reserves will be added to the *proven* fields in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Iraq, and the sheikhdoms, Persian Gulf oil would suffice for twenty-three-and-a-half years of world demand at *1985* rates of consumption. Moreover, every oilman with experience of the area believes that the 367-billion-barrel reserve figure is much too low an estimate.

In physical and economic terms, then, Professor Adelman is clearly right: there *is* plenty of oil; and since operating costs amount to about 5 per cent of the sale price, or at most 10 per cent in the less prolific fields, the price of oil should not increase even if there should be a 400-per-cent growth in demand. Indeed, the price of oil could even go down—if, that is, the owners of the different oil fields were to compete with each other to capture greater shares of the market.

Walter J. Levy's projection of worldwide demand for Middle East oil is somewhat higher than Adelman's, but it is not over the data that they disagree. Levy simply believes that economic facts will not matter. Having observed the oil business since the 30's, Levy sees no reason to think that the restrictive "cartel" structure of the industry will change. The only difference is that instead of a company cartel, the industry will become a "host-country" cartel (to use a term

WALTER LAQUEUR, a contributing editor of COMMENTARY, is the director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London and the author of *The Rebirth of Europe* and *The Struggle for the Middle East*, among other works. EDWARD LUTTWAK, here making his first appearance in these pages, is a former oil consultant now associated with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and the author of *Coup d'Etat* and *A Dictionary of Modern War*.

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which is now obsolescent, since the "hosts" are getting rid of their guests, and going into the production end of the business on their own, or at least taking the profits). And, Levy argues, if the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)* does indeed continue to function as an effective cartel, the physical surplus of oil will be irrelevant, since the "host" countries will restrict supplies and charge whatever the market will bear.

All but two of the Persian Gulf producers (Iran and Iraq are the exceptions) do not even *need* the additional cash flow that more abundant oil sales would generate. Thus, Levy points out, there may be no way of inducing them to produce additional oil, and certainly they will have no incentive to lower prices in order to sell more oil. For the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, or even for the Saudis, an ever greater surplus of cash would simply make them more attractive targets for insurrection or external attack; in the Saudi case, spending money for large-scale economic and social development would create a new class of detribalized ex-Bedouins who would no longer tolerate a monarchy that is still alien to most Arabians two generations after the Saudi conquest. As it is, much of the money paid to these countries by the oil companies has been deposited at very low interest rates in Swiss Franc/-DM accounts, or invested in depreciating dollar bonds.

According to Adelman, it is the U.S. State Department that is primarily responsible for the present crisis and the new-found strength of OPEC. It is the State Department, he points out, that has supported the "majors" or, as their enemies like to call them, "the seven sisters" (BP, Shell, Jersey or Exxon, Stancal or Chevron, Texaco, Gulf, and Mobil) in their appeasement of OPEC. And it is the State Department that has persistently discouraged any talk of meeting blackmail with sanctions.

Adelman's solution is to induce the "majors" to give up the production end of the business. This would turn them into marketing companies, which would have every incentive to buy oil at the cheapest possible price in order to maximize their "downstream" profits. Adelman asserts that this would weaken OPEC's "host-country" cartel, and that the latter could even break up as its members begin to underbid each other in order to sell their oil.

LEVY, however, foresees precisely the opposite happening. He points out that with a short-sighted unilateralism that is also painfully evident in East-West relations, the developed nations of the world are competing with each other in courting the favor of the tin emperors, kings, emirs, sheikhs, and self-appointed presidents of the Persian Gulf. Thus the Japanese have chosen to advertise the fact that they would never support any use of military force *or even political pressure* on the oil producers, and most European powers agree. This means that the internally fragile and quite defenseless mini-states of the Gulf would be allowed to wage what would amount to economic warfare against the West (to which Japan belongs in this context), while the West in turn would abide by a self-denying ordinance that would deprive it of any means of exerting countervailing pressure. Levy thinks that in the absence of an adequate incentive—and mere money will not suffice—only a *political* entente among the consumer nations can bring the energy economy of the West into balance by posing the ultimate threat of force.

Neither Levy nor Adelman nor any other reputable energy economist believes that there is a substantial alternative to OPEC oil over the next decade, and indeed into the 1990's. To look at one example of a much-advertised alternative, fuel extracted from the tar sands of Canada, it would take a capital cost on the order of $60 billion—with many more billions needed for feeder lines, storage systems, and trunk pipelines, not to mention environmental damage—to supply all projected U.S. import needs for 1985. In the Middle East the comparable costs would be less than one-tenth as much, and with no environmental damage to speak of—even if it mattered in the wastes of Arabia.

The *long-term* prospects of atomic energy, on the other hand, are now considerably brighter than even a few years ago. Until recently all reactor systems planned were based on the use of nuclear fission, which is not very efficient, requires a great deal of uranium, and also involves the major problem of radioactive waste disposal. The process of nuclear fusion, in contrast, could provide a literally unlimited supply of heat for conversion into electricity; and deuterium, on which the process will ultimately be based, provides an inexhaustible fuel supply. But major *scientific* as well as technological problems remain to be solved. Progress since the middle 60's has been impressive and the speed of *technological* advance will largely depend on the financial allocations made, but the scientific unknowns are just that, and more money for more research could simply be wasted. At present the Atomic Energy Commission's fusion research budget is only $90 million annually. Significantly, some leading oil companies, including Gulf and Shell, have gone nuclear in recent years. Hardly anyone expects that nuclear energy will contribute more than 15 per cent of total U.S. energy supply by 1985 or much more than twice that at the end of the century—though much depends on the priority assigned to energy self-sufficiency.

* OPEC is made up of Abu Dhabi, Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Venezeula.

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At the cost of one year's growth in the GNP, even present technology could supply all the general energy and all the synthetic fuel needed.

As for the "realistic" self-sufficiency program for the U.S. now being promoted by the "major"-supported National Petroleum Council (NPC), which calls for 90-per-cent self-sufficiency by 1985, this is both expensive and environmentally undesirable. Among other things, this program entails the construction of 435 nuclear (fission) plants (of one million kw each) as well as seventy assorted shale-extraction, coal-gasification, coal-liquefaction, and geothermal plants. The program assumes, moreover, a 37-per-cent increase in domestic natural-gas and oil production, in addition to a 176-per-cent increase in coal output —all by 1985. Even if one is disenchanted with the environmentalist lobby and its professional alarmism, it is obvious that the NPC program would result in serious environmental damage—not to mention a substantial increase in energy prices to the consumer.

Obviously, if the oil business were like any other industry—dominated, that is, by *economic* considerations of profits and costs—the currently projected energy needs of Europe and Japan (which the NPC program would not help to satisfy), and those of the United States, would cause no alarm, any more than the projected need for imports of luxury automobiles and Scandinavian "hostesses" into the Persian Gulf causes alarm to the OPEC nations. But while there is no Organization of Automobile Exporting Countries and no international cartel for blondes, there *is* an Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and one that is fortified both by the solidarity of shared victories and the well-founded expectation of still greater successes in the future. Not prone to selling themselves short, OPEC spokesmen like Sheikh Yamani of Saudi Arabia have threatened to destroy Western industry and Western civilization unless OPEC's demands are met. Yamani was speaking for the gallery, but other Arabs seriously see matters precisely in these terms.

WHEN OPEC was founded thirteen years ago, few observers expected that this timid alliance of conservative states would become the Frankenstein monster of the oil world. Like any bona-fide international body, OPEC acquired a headquarters building, a (Venezuelan) Secretary-General, a well-paid staff of ministerial protégés, and an even better-paid staff of consultants ready to turn out elegantly-bound reports at a moment's notice. But unlike many other organizations similarly equipped, OPEC also had a clear purpose, in fact only *one* purpose: "price stability," or in other words, high oil prices.

Being a cartel, OPEC could be no stronger than the weakest of its members, and its membership included, as it still does, some of the most fragile states of the world; Kuwait was still a British protectorate, Iran and Saudi Arabia w submissive clients of the U.S. and all but one, Iraq, were effectively dominated by the production consortia established on their soil. Even the fairly erratic Iraqis were careful not to go too far, and for all their bombast they refrained from nationalizing the production acreage of the Iraq Petroleum Company. In fact, OPEC was so fragile a creature that it only survived because the "majors" adopted toward it the policy they still pursue, of mild public opposition and strong private support. For once they had absorbed the shock of seeing the natives joining in a common front—as they themselves had been doing for decades—the "majors" realized that OPEC could be used as a decisive weapon in their fight to keep prices high in the face of aggressive competition from the "independents," the "nationals" (such as ENI of Italy and Petrobras of Brazil), and the Russians.

The one thing the "majors" did not anticipate in OPEC's early years—when it could have been easily destroyed—was that some power other than themselves could make use of the organization. Nor, in fairness, did anyone else anticipate the emergence of the once complaisant Shah of Iran as the aggressive leader of OPEC. (Qaddafi has made more noise, but it is generally recognized that the Shah has had the real leverage—including the ability to unleash, or cut off, the Libyans.) It was the Shah's persistent and finally successful attempt to achieve a quantum jump in his oil revenues that transformed OPEC into the powerful cartel of today.

Engaged in a large-scale program of economic development and land reform, with a prudently commensurate expansion of his army/police repressive base, the Shah began to press the Iranian consortium for a rapid increase in output and hence in his own tax revenues. But the interlocking ownership structure of Gulf oil meant that the partners in the Iranian consortium had no incentive to lift more oil there at the expense of growth elsewhere in the Gulf. The lead company in Iran, BP, whose share of the output amounted to 40 per cent, was already "long" on crude and did not want more in Iran. It preferred to "offtake" more in Kuwait, where its share was 50 per cent, or in Abu Dhabi, where its share was only 23.75 per cent but where its profits per barrel were also higher. Jersey (Exxon) was in a similar position. Its share of Iranian output was only 6 per cent while it had 30 per cent of Aramco liftings in Saudi Arabia, and Aramco rules penalized partners who did not take their full share of a production increase.

After toying with an "economic" solution (i.e., a tax cut), the Shah tried the political highroad: he threatened retaliation unless the consortium agreed to lift much more oil at a rapid and specified rate. At the same time he skillfully defused opposition from other Gulf producers

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(whose own production growth would thereby be curtailed) by propounding a new criterion, based on Iran's large population and vast development needs and, more to the point, by promising the political support and security assistance of a strong Iran to the weak states on the Arab side of the Gulf.

In this first confrontation, the pattern of events that has now been followed all the way to expropriation was set: the U.S. State Department strongly urged the "majors" to be conciliatory; the French announced their willingness to "help out" Iran if the consortium should show a fight. From Italy to Japan the irresolution and disarray of the consumer nations were made very evident. That the Libyans should have gone on to limit output (1970), raise taxes (repeatedly), and finally expropriate BP (in 1972) and its U.S. "independent" partner, Hunt (in 1973), surprised no one. It is indeed undeniable that, as Professor Adelman claims, the State Department's oil officials have gone out of the way to stress the strength of the "host" countries' bargaining position and counsel appeasement, while pouring cold water on any genuine effort at consumer-nation cooperation.

Like the "majors," OPEC believes in maximizing profits per barrel, instead of maximizing revenues on expanded sales—as many naive entrepreneurs persist in doing outside the oil business. Thus, even if the kings and sheikhs of Araby are persuaded, no doubt by means of suitable political concessions, to raise output to the required level, the price of Gulf oil is likely to increase from the present $1.80-$1.95 to $3 or even $4 per barrel (FOB). For the developed countries, this will mean a vastly increased outflow of currency, and it is bound to cause severe financial problems.

It is for all these reasons that Walter J. Levy, no friend of Israel and hitherto a consistent supporter of accommodation with the "host" countries, declared at the March 1973 Euro-American Amsterdam Conference that the world energy equation cannot be balanced if the sanction of force is removed. So far, however, no form of genuine cooperation among the consumer nations has materialized, while the prospect of *forceful* cooperation remains very remote.

II

Because the oil industry is not dominated by economic considerations, the countries which have most of the proven reserves and the extra capacity to supply oil—Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Persian Gulf emirates—become very important in any consideration of what the future holds. There is every reason to assume that by the end of the decade all oil fields and installations will be nationalized, or that there will be something like 100-per-cent participation on the part of the producer countries. In any case, the local governments will almost certainly be in effective control of operations, and the question of who will be in power in Ryadh, Teheran, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi is therefore crucial.

It was widely believed until recently that the Arabs (to put it crudely) would have to sell their oil anyway, since they could not drink it. This is true to the extent that the more populous countries such as Iran will need all the money they can get for their ambitious domestic development plans. But it is only partly true of Saudi Arabia, which has been able to make use only of 60 per cent of its oil income this year. To the mini-states like Kuwait, which has already put aside some $6 billion in investments, a billion dollars more or less does not really matter. Colonel Qaddafi or the Kuwaitis rightly argue that since oil prices constantly rise, a barrel of oil in the ground is worth more than a barrel on the market. Libya's present production is only about half of what it was in 1970. Kuwait's producing capacity is now 200 million tons a year, but its government (following the Libyan example) has cut production this year to 150 million, and the Kuwaiti opposition—Kuwait having a parliament of sorts—demands a further cut to 120 million. As for the smaller countries like Abu Dhabi (population 55,000), which a few years hence will produce as much oil as Kuwait does at present, it is difficult to think of any convincing Western argument that expansion of output to match Western demand will be worth their while. If they cannot drink oil, they cannot eat gold either. Once they have collected their first few billion dollars, the smaller Middle-Eastern countries can cut production or stop it altogether for a lengthy period without suffering major harm.

Nature has certainly been most unjust in distributing the oil fields of the Middle East; they should have been located in poor countries like Egypt which desperately need capital. But they are not, and these vagaries of nature will almost certainly have far-reaching political consequences. For however great the riches these small or thinly populated countries will amass, they will remain weak and hence exposed to danger. In less enlightened ages, these states would have been taken over by their more powerful neighbors, or at least held to ransom, just as rich medieval cities had to pay tribute to robber knights and highwaymen. In our day more subtle methods are applied, such as take-over by proxy. This does not entirely rule out direct superpower intervention, should the situation in the Middle East get out of control altogether; it would not be the first time the Middle East has been divided into spheres of influence. Such high-handed action could even be justified (*pace* Senator Fulbright) in Marxist-Leninist terms. For if monopolies are not tolerated any longer in any advanced

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country, and if the super-rich are heavily taxed or even expropriated, there is no valid reason to accept an anomalous state of affairs on the international scene, provided of course adequate compensation is paid to the former owners and the oil is made accessible at cheap prices to all countries.

Such a course of action may seem far-fetched at the present time. But what if the situation should seriously deteriorate over a number of years? Meanwhile, it is far more likely that the countries concerned will retain their independence but that they will be shaken by major internal convulsions and that the Persian Gulf will gradually become one of the main danger zones in world politics.

III

AMONG the states in this area, Iran is the strongest and most stable, but the vacuum created by Britain's withdrawal from most positions east of Suez has had immediate repercussions on Persian policy. Iran's defense budget has increased twenty-fold since 1968, and the Shah's shopping list during his recent visit to Washington included one of the biggest helicopter fleets in the world and F-14 aircraft; elsewhere the Persians are acquiring Chieftain tanks and missile-firing ships. Five years ago Iran felt reasonably secure, maintaining excellent relations with the Soviet bloc, the West, and most of its neighbors. Today it feels threatened from several directions: the breakup of Pakistan, the coup in Afghanistan, Indian designs in the Persian Gulf, Iraqi intrigues and aggression have contributed to this change.

Not all of these dangers are immediate or constitute an overwhelming threat to Iran's security. India, that colossus on feet of clay, is much too absorbed in internal affairs to pursue an active foreign policy, far away from its own borders. Iraq, Iran's main foe, will go exactly as far as the Russians permit; and the Russians do not seem eager at the moment to risk a major crisis in the Gulf. But this may change at some future date, and the Shah has mended his fences with the Saudis and the smaller oil-producing states in the Gulf. Nevertheless, there remains a good deal of traditional suspicion between Persian and Arab: the Arabs know that while the Shah has been making sympathetic noises regarding their grievances against Israel, they can count on his active help about as much as on Venezuela. On the other hand, the Gulf states may accept Iran's help in an emergency, but they would be of no help if Iran itself were in danger.

Concerning Iranian economic progress in recent years and the prospects for further advance, there is no doubt. But such progress on its own does not guarantee political stability. The extreme Left and extreme Right continue to oppose the Shah's policy, and there are separatist tendencies in Khuzistan (fostered by the Iraqis from across the border) and in other parts of the country. Manifestations of open hostility to the regime are restricted on the whole to Persian students in America and Western Europe; SAVAK, the political police, has been able to prevent, with a few exceptions, the emergence of terrorist gangs on the Turkish pattern. Yet if there is no strong opposition to the regime, there is no widespread organized support either, simply because political activity on the domestic scene has been discouraged. The danger to the present regime is a military coup on the Arab pattern.

THE Iraqi rulers compete with Colonel Qaddafi for the role of chief troublemaker in the Middle East. But while Qaddafi's Islamic fundamentalism has made him the hero of at least some Arabs outside Libya (and is considered to be an extenuating circumstance by others), few Arabs have anything but distaste and suspicion for the dictatorship in Iraq. The fact that the Communists have now become partners in the national coalition has not made the regime any more popular inside the country or in the Arab world. The ruling stratum consists of some 2,000-3,000 army officers and party officials which for a number of years showed remarkable cohesion, correctly assuming that if the regime should be overthrown, their fate, in the best Iraqi tradition, would not be an enviable one. More recently there have been conspiracies and executions involving the secret police chief and other leading figures; the period of relative quiet seems to be over.

Iraq has one major asset other than oil—Soviet support. Seen from Moscow, Iraq is now the most promising country in the whole area, and it has replaced Egypt as the cornerstone of Soviet Middle Eastern policy. The Soviet Union has for many years supported Iraq's claim to Kuwait; Kuwait, nominally at least, was part of the Vilayet of Basra under the Ottoman empire, even though the Turks never really exercised full sovereignty. Following the conquest of Kuwait, Iraqi oil production (and oil revenues) would treble, and it would get a much more secure foothold in the Persian Gulf. The Iraqis tried, half-heartedly, last March; they will probably try again. Kuwait is too big a prize to be given up easily.

Of Kuwait's 700,000 inhabitants, the majority are not locals but Palestinians, Iraqis, and others without whose technical and administrative skills the city-state would soon collapse. Kuwait has a little army of some 8,000 men on whose expansion no less than $500 million are now spent; it has bought Phantoms from the United States and three squadrons of fighters from Britain. It pays some $200 million yearly to Egypt, Jordan, and al-Fatah as a way of expressing sympathy with the cause of Arabism, and,

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incidentally, to assure its survival. But it remains highly vulnerable. The native Kuwaitis have become rich (one-family apartments for $300,000 are no longer a rarity), whereas the foreigners who do the work are treated like servants. An outside threat of attack coupled with a rising from within would find the country quite defenseless. Kuwaiti oil revenues are at present about $2 billion, making it the country with the highest standard of living in the world, with the exception of Abu Dhabi—in theory at least. By the end of the decade revenues will be at least three times as high, making the attraction for a would-be invader well nigh overwhelming.

Kuwait has survived so far owing to the delicate balance of power in the Persian Gulf with Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia directly involved and the big powers discreetly in the background. The same goes *a fortiori* for the mini-mini states like Abu Dhabi, Dubai, the Sultanate of Oman (population 750,000), and Qatar with 115,000 inhabitants. They are all "nice little oligarchies" (to quote a recent writer) governed by ruling families with countless cousins, nephews, and especially uncles who among them occupy all key positions. Coups are of course frequent.

The West and Japan could manage, if necessary, without the oil from the Gulf principalities; they could do without Iraq and Libya. But Saudi Arabia is crucial for the simple reason that Saudi reserves are estimated at present at 160 billion barrels, 25 per cent of total world proven resources, with much of the country as yet unexplored—compared with 50 billion in the United States and 25 billion in Libya. When Lee Dinsmore, former U.S. Consul General at Dhahran, appeared at the House hearings on U.S. interest in the Persian Gulf last year, the first question he was asked by the chairman, Lee Hamilton (D. Ind.), was: "Mr. Dinsmore, how stable is the Saudi Arabian government today?" Mr. Dinsmore, tongue in cheek: "The regime of Saudi Arabia is as stable as it has ever been." Hamilton: "Are there sources of discontent in the country?" Mr. Dinsmore: "If there are sources of discontent in the country, they did not talk to American diplomats."

This seems to be a very fair description of the prevailing state of affairs, even though it is not very enlightening. Following Egypt's eclipse, Saudi Arabia's importance in Arab affairs has increased. But the political base of the regime is as narrow as it ever was. While King Faisal is a great improvement over Saud, his predecessor, the country is still run by the royal family as if it were its private property, with an inner core of some 500 princes of varying importance; together with their retainers they may count 5,000. The oil industry employs altogether 15,000 people out of a population of 5,000,000. But there are 700,000 foreigners, including many Yemenites, Egyptians, and Palestinians. Reluctant concessions to the modern world have not so far transformed the Saudi Arabian desert into the paradise promised by Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the influential oil minister. Newspapers, the two local universities, and social clubs are under strictest supervision; in comparison with Saudi Arabia, autocratic Kuwait is a permissive society, an anarchist's utopia. But strict controls have not been sufficient to quench the spirit of rebellion. There have been five attempted coups in recent years mainly involving the Saudi airforce. At least two of them seem to have been serious; they resulted in dozens of arrests and the grounding of the whole air force.

IV

Given the nature of the international oil business and the internal instability of the Middle Eastern members of OPEC, what are we to make of the threat to stop the oil supply altogether or to cut it drastically unless Arab political demands are met? There are no certainties in the Middle East, and to foresee all contingencies is clearly impossible. But the following general propositions seem at present more likely than not:

1) There will be no common action on political issues among all members of OPEC. Some of them will restrict or cut back production; but on the other hand, forecasts for the rate of increase in Western consumption may have been exaggerated. Nationalization will continue and there will be constant pressure for higher prices for oil and oil products. Whether the producers will be guided by prudence in their course of action is not certain. It is certain, however, that if the FOB price of a barrel of Gulf oil should approach five dollars in the not-so-distant future, the consumer nations will initiate massive crash programs to develop alternative sources of energy instead of the present half-hearted projects.

2) If the "conservative"* forces should stay in power during the critical ten-fifteen years ahead, they will need the West at least as much as the West needs them, not for economic reasons but to ensure their political survival. They will be under growing pressure from their enemies within and without (Iraq, South Yemen, and in the background, more discreetly, the Soviet Union). The polarization of forces in the Arab world is

* The term "conservative" is used in this context with the greatest reluctance. "Right" and "Left" clearly make no sense in the Middle East, but the use of terms such as "conservative" and "radical" is not much more helpful; a radical in present conditions can be a Maoist or a Quaddafi-type Muslim fundamentalist. The dividing line is between old-style autocracies, mostly monarchies, and military dictatorships using populist slogans. The social origin of the rulers is not the same, but power in either case is concentrated in the hands of a very small number of people with no intention whatsoever of letting "the masses" share it.

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bound to reduce the importance of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The "conservatives" will stress that their anti-Israeli fervor is second to none so as not to be outflanked by the extreme slogans of the more "radical" regimes. A growing part of their income will be devoted to financing various anti-Israeli activities. Considering the magnitude of the sums involved, Israel will thus be subjected to substantial harassment in many fields. But, paradoxically, the prolongation of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the most effective insurance for the survival of the "conservative" regimes for at least some time to come. While the "Israeli danger" overshadows all other issues, they will enjoy immunity from direct attack. Pan-Arabism and "national solidarity" will prevent the "radicals"—except the most extreme among them—from launching an all-out attack against the "conservatives."

3) So far as the prospects of the "radical" forces in the area go, Iran and Saudi Arabia are the key countries. A successful coup in Iran would cause the fall of Kuwait and Abu Dhabi in no time and would make the situation of the present regime in Saudi Arabia highly precarious, to say the least. A successful coup in Saudi Arabia would not, on the other hand, endanger Iran because of the essential weakness of the country. A "radical" victory in Iran or Saudi Arabia could cause a drastic cut or even a temporary stoppage of oil supplies to the West, not necessarily to achieve any specific political or economic aim, but to demonstrate to the world the power and the intransigence of the new regime. However, such action would be effective only if it were supported at the same time by several major producers, and this for a variety of reasons is unlikely to happen. A "radical" regime in Iran would still depend on oil revenues for the economic development of the country. An ambitious Saudi military dictator would still want to have the means to assert his influence at home and abroad. Furthermore, there is no solidarity among the "radicals." On the contrary, a "radical" Saudi (or Iranian) regime would be no friendlier toward the Baghdad Ba'athi leadership than King Faisal. Quite possibly it would follow an even more aggressive political line, just as King Farouk got along much better with the late Hashemite kings of Iraq than Nasser did with those who succeeded the Hashemites. In the mini-states on the Persian Gulf just about anything can happen, including the seizure of power by a few dozen determined gangsters. In view of the smallness of these city and (village) states, their capacity for mischief making is probably limited.

To summarize, then, oil supplies from the Middle East are likely to continue under the present or almost any alternative management. But there is no certainty, and given the inherent instability of the area, reinforced by the influx of vast sums of money during the next few years, the risk that supplies may be affected is too large for comfort. Temporary stoppages are quite possible, and they might cause a great deal of harm. An embargo seems less likely than a fall in production or even total stoppage following a war in the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Peninsula or internal warfare. In the meantime, a Western military presence will be more effective in securing the flow of oil than political measures, which are unlikely to affect the internal situation in the oil-producing countries. However, since the days of cheap oil are over anyway, the only sensible course of action for the industrialized nations is to take immediate steps to reduce their dependence on Middle Eastern oil as much (and as soon) as possible.

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Mailer's "Marilyn"

Clive James

"She was a fruitcake," Tony Curtis once told an interviewer on BBC television, and there can't be much doubt that she was. Apart from conceding that the camera was desperately in love with her, professional judgments of Marilyn Monroe's attributes rarely go much further. It would be strange if they did: there's work to be done, and a girl blessed with equivalent magic might happen along any time—might even not be a fruitcake. Amateur judgments, on the other hand, are free to flourish. Norman Mailer's new book* is just such a one.

Even if its narrative were not so blatantly, and self-admittedly, cobbled together from facts already available in other biographies, the Mailer *Marilyn* would still be an amateur piece of work. Its considerable strength lies in that limitation. As far as talent goes, Marilyn Monroe was so minimally gifted as to be almost unemployable, and anyone who holds to the opinion that she was a great natural comic identifies himself immediately as a dunce. For purposes best known to his creative demon, Mailer planes forward on the myth of her enormous talent like a drunken surfer. Not for the first time, he gets further by going with the flow than he ever could have done by caviling. Thinking of her as a genius, he can call her drawbacks virtues, and so deal—unimpeded by skepticism—with the vital mystery of her presence.

Mailer's adoration is as amateurish as an autograph hunter's. But because of it we are once again, and this time ideally, reminded of his extraordinary receptivity. That the book should be an embarrassing and embarrassed rush-job is somehow suitable. The author being who he is, the book might as well be conceived in the most chaotic possible circumstances. The subject is, after all, one of the best possible focal points for his chaotic view of life. There is nothing detached or calculating about that view. It is hot-eyed, errant, unhinged. Writhing along past a gallery of yummy photographs, the text reads as the loopiest message yet from the Mailer who scared Sonny Liston with thought waves, made the medical breakthrough which identified cancer as the thwarted psyche's revenge, and first rumbled birth control as the hidden cause of pregnancy. And yet *Marilyn* is one of Mailer's most interesting things. Easy to punish, it is hard to admire—like its subject. But admire it we must—like its subject. The childishness of the whole project succeeds in emitting a power that temporarily calls adulthood into question: The Big Book of the Mad Girl. Consuming it at a long gulp, the reader ponders over and over again Mailer's copiously fruitful aptitude for submission. Mailer is right to trust his own foolishness, wherever it leads; even if the resulting analysis of contemporary America impresses us as less diagnostic than symptomatic.

Not solely for the purpose of disarming criticism, Mailer calls his *Marilyn* a biography in novel form. The parent novel, we quickly guess, is *Deer Park*, and we aren't 75 pages into this new book before we find Charles Francis Eitel and Elena Esposito being referred to as if they were people living in our minds—which, of course, they are. The permanent party of *Deer Park* ("if desires were deeds, the history of the night would end in history") is still running, and the atom bomb that lit the desert's rim for Sergius O'Shaugnessy and Lulu Meyers flames just as bright. But by now Sergius is out from under cover: he's Norman Mailer. And his beloved film star has been given a real name too: Marilyn Monroe. Which doesn't necessarily make her any the less fictional. By claiming the right to launch vigorous imaginative patrols from a factual base, Mailer gives himself an easy out from the strictures of verisimilitude, especially when the facts are discovered to be contradictory. But Mailer's fantasizing goes beyond expediency. Maurice Zolotow, poor pained scrivener, can sue Mailer all he likes, but neither he nor the quiescent Fred Lawrence Guiles will ever get his Marilyn back. Mailer's Marilyn soars above the known data, an apocalyptic love-object no mundane pen-pusher could dream of reaching. Dante and Petrarch barely knew Beatrice and Laura. It didn't slow them down. Mailer never met Marilyn at all. It gives him the inside track.

Critical fashion would have it that since *Deer Park* reality has been busy turning itself into a novel. As Philip Roth said it must, the extremism of real events has ended up by leaving the creative imagination looking like an also-ran. A

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* *Marilyn*, Grosset & Dunlap, 271 pp., Illustrated, $19.95.

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heroine in a 50's novel, Lulu was really a girl of the 40's—she had some measure of control over her life. Mailer now sees that the young Marilyn was the true 50's heroine—she had no control over her life whatsoever. In the declension from Lulu as Mailer then saw her to Marilyn as he sees her now, we can clearly observe what is involved in dispensing with the classical, shaping imagination and submitting one's talent (well, Mailer's talent) to the erratic forces of events. Marilyn, says Mailer, was every man's love affair with America. He chooses to forget now that Sergius was in love with something altogether sharper, just as he chooses to forget that for many men Marilyn in fact represented most of the things that were to be feared about America. Worshiping a doll was an activity that often came into question at the time. Later on, it became a clever critical point to insist that the doll was gifted: she walks, she talks, she plays Anna Christie at the Actors' Studio. Later still, the doll was canonized. By the time we get to this book, it is as though there had never been any doubt: the sickness of the 50's lay, not in overvaluing Marilyn Monroe, but in undervaluing her.

MARILYN, says Mailer, suggested sex might be as easy as ice cream. He chooses to forget that for many men at the time she suggested sex might have about the same nutritional value. The early photographs by André de Dienes—taken before her teeth were fixed but compensating by showing an invigorating flash of panty above the waistline of her denims—enshrine the essence of her snuggle-pie sexuality, which in the ensuing years was regularized, but never intensified, by successive applications of oomph and class. Adorable, dumb tomato, she was the best of the worst. As the imitators, and imitators of the imitators, were put into the field behind her, she attained the uniqueness of the paradigm, but that was the sum total of her originality as a sex-bomb. Any man in his right mind would have loved to have her. Mailer spends a good deal of the book trying to drum up what mystical significance he can out of that fact, without even once facing the possibility of that fact representing the *limitation* of her sexuality—the criticism of it, and the true center of her tragedy. Her screen presence, the Factor X she possessed in the same quantity as Garbo, served mainly to potentiate the sweetness. The sweetness of the girl bride, the unwomanly woman, the *femme* absolutely not *fatale*.

> In her ambition, so Faustian, and in her ignorance of culture's dimensions, in her liberation and her tyrannical desires, her noble democratic longings intimately contradicted by the widening pool of her narcissism (where every friend and slave must bathe), we can see the magnified mirror of ourselves, our exaggerated and now all but defeated generation, yes she ran a reconnaissance through the 50's. . . .

Apart from increasing one's suspicions that the English sentence is being executed in America, such a passage of rhetorical foolery raises the question of whether the person Mailer is trying to fool with it might not conceivably be himself. If "magnified mirror of ourselves" means anything, it must include Mailer. Is Mailer ignorant of culture's dimensions? The answer, one fears, being not that he is, but that he would like to be—so that he could write more books like *Marilyn*. As Mailer nuzzles up beside the shade of this poor kitten to whom so much happened but who could cause so little to happen, you can hear the purr of sheer abandon. He himself would like very much to be the man without values, expending his interpretative powers on whatever the world declared to be important. Exceptional people, Mailer says (these words are almost exactly his, only the grammar having been altered, to unveil the epigram), have a way of living with opposites in themselves that can be called schizophrenia only when it fails. The opposite in Mailer is the hick who actually falls for all that guff about screen queens, voodoo prize fighters, and wonder-boy Presidents. But his way of living with it hasn't yet quite failed. And somehow, it must be admitted, he seems to get further, see deeper, than those writers who haven't got it to live with.

In tracing Marilyn's narcissism back to her fatherless childhood, our author is at his strongest. His propensity for scaling the mystical ramparts notwithstanding, Mailer in his Aquarius/Prisoner role is a lay psychologist of formidable prowess. The self-love, and the unassuageable need to have it confirmed—any fatherless child is bound to recognize the pattern, and be astonished at how the writing generates the authentic air of continuous panic. But—good as this analysis is, it still doesn't make Marilyn's narcissism ours. There is narcissism and there is narcissism, and to a depressing degree Marilyn's was the sadly recognizable version of the actress who could read a part but could never be bothered reading a complete script. Mailer knows what it took Marilyn to get to the top: everything from betraying friends to lying down under geriatric strangers. Given the system, Marilyn was the kind of monster equipped to climb through it. What's debilitating is that Mailer seems to have given up imagining other systems. He is right to involve himself in the dynamics of Hollywood; he does better by enthusiastically replaying its vanished games than by standing aloof; but for a man of his brains he doesn't *despise* the place enough. His early gift for submitting himself to the grotesqueness of reality is softening with the years into a disinclination to argue with it. In politics he still fights on, although with what effect on his allies one hesitates to think. But in questions of culture—including, damagingly, the cultural aspects of politics—he has by now come within an ace of accepting whatever is as right. His determination to place on

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Marilyn the same valuation conferred by any sentimentalist is a sure token.

On the point of Marilyn's putative talents, Mailer wants it both ways. He wants her to be an important natural screen presence, which she certainly was; and he wants her to be an important natural actress, which she certainly wasn't. So long as he wants it the first way, he gets it: *Marilyn* is an outstandingly sympathetic analysis of what makes somebody look special on screen, and reads all the better for its periodic eruptions into incoherent lyricism. But so long as he wants it the second way, he gets nowhere. He is quite right to talk of *Some Like It Hot* as her best film, but drastically overestimates her strength in it. Mailer knows all about the hundreds of takes and the thousands of fluffs, and faithfully records the paroxysms of anguish she caused Billy Wilder and Tony Curtis. But he seems to assume that once a given scene was in the can it became established as a miracle of assurance. And the plain fact is that her salient weakness—the inability to read a line—was ineradicable. Every phrase came out as if it had just been memorized. *Just* been memorized. And that film was the high point of the short-winded, monotonous attack she had developed for getting lines across. In earlier films, all the way back to the beginning, we are assailed with varying degrees of the irrepressible panic which infected a voice that couldn't tell where to place emphasis. As a natural silent comedian Marilyn might possibly have qualified, with the proviso that she was not to be depended upon to invent anything. But as a natural comedian in sound she had the conclusive disadvantage of not being able to speak. She was limited ineluctably to characters who rented language but could never possess it, and all her best roles fell into that category. She was good at being inarticulately abstracted for the same reason that midgets are good at being short.

To hear Mailer overpraising Marilyn's performance in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is to wonder if he has any sense of humor at all. Leaving out of account an aberration like *Man's Favorite Sport* (in which Paula Prentiss, a comedienne who actually knows something about being funny, was entirely wasted), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is the least entertaining comedy Howard Hawks ever made. With its manic exaggeration of Hawks's already heavy emphasis on male aggressiveness transplanted to the female, the film later became a touchstone for the Hawksian cinéastes (who also lacked a sense of humor, and tended to talk ponderously about the role-reversals in *Bringing Up Baby* before passing with relief to the supposed wonders of *Hatari*), but the awkward truth is that with this project Hawks landed himself with the directorial situation he was least likely to find liberating—dealing with dumb sex instead of the bright kind. Hawks supplied a robust professional framework for Marilyn's accomplishments, such as they were. Where I lived, at any rate, her performance in the film was generally regarded as mildly winning in spite of her obvious, fundamental inadequacies—the *in spite of* being regarded as the secret of any uniqueness her appeal might have. Mailer tells it differently:

> In the best years with DiMaggio, her physical coordination is never more vigorous and athletically quick; she dances with all the grace she is ever going to need when doing *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, all the grace and all the bazazz—she is a musical comedy star with panache! Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend! What a surprise! And sings so well Zanuck will first believe her voice was dubbed. . . .

This is the language of critical self-deception, fine judgment suppressed in the name of a broader cause. What does it mean to dance with all the grace you are ever going to need? It doesn't sound the same as being good at dancing. The fact was that she could handle a number like the "Running Wild" routine in the train corridor in *Some Like It Hot* (Wilder covered it with the marvelous cutaways of Lemmon slapping the back of the bull-fiddle and Curtis making ping-pong-ball eyes while blowing sax), but anything harder than that was pure pack-drill. And if Zanuck really believed that her voice was dubbed, then for once in his life he must have made an intuitive leap, because to say that her singing voice didn't sound as if it belonged to her was to characterize it with perfect accuracy. Like her speaking voice, it was full of panic.

It took more than sympathy for her horrible death and nostalgia for her atavistic cuddlesomeness to blur these judgments, which at one time all intelligent people shared. The thing that tipped the balance toward adulation was Camp—Camp's yen for the vulnerable in women, which is just as inexorable as its hunger for the strident. When Mailer talks about Marilyn's vulnerability, he means the inadequacy of her sense of self. Camp, however, knew that the vulnerability which mattered was centered in the inadequacy of her talent. She just wasn't very good, and was thus eligible for membership in the ever-increasing squad of Camp heroines who make their gender seem less threatening by being so patently unaware of how they're going over. On the strident wing of the team, Judy Garland is a perennial favorite for the same reason. If common sense weren't enough to do it, the Camp enthusiasm for Monroe should have told Mailer—Mailer of all people—that the sexuality he was getting set to rave about was the kind that leaves the viewer utterly uncommitted.

Mailer longs to talk of Monroe as a symbolic figure, node of a death wish and foretaste of the fog. Embroiled in such higher criticism, he doesn't much concern himself with the twin questions of what shape Hollywood took in the 50's and of how

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resonantly apposite a representative Marilyn turned out to be of the old studio system's last gasp. As the third-string blond at Fox (behind Betty Grable and June Haver) Marilyn was not—as Mailer would have it—in all that unpromising a spot. She was in luck, like Kim Novak at Columbia, who was groomed by Harry Cohn to follow Rita Hayworth in the characteristic 50's transposition which substituted apprehensiveness for ability. For girls like them, the roles would eventually be there—mainly crummy roles in mainly crummy movies, but they were the movies the studios were banking on. For the real actresses, times were tougher, and didn't ease for more than a decade. Anne Bancroft, for example, also started out at Fox, but unlike Marilyn, couldn't get the ghost of a break Mailer isn't careful enough about pointing out that Fox's record as a starmaker was hopeless in all departments: Marilyn was by no means a unique case of neglect, and in comparison with Bancroft got a smooth ride. Marilyn was just another item in the endless catalogue of Zanuck's imperviousness to box-office potential. James Robert Parish, in his useful history, *The Fox Girls,** sums up the vicissitudes of Marilyn's career at Fox with admirable brevity and good sense, and if the reader would like to make up his own mind about the facts, it's to that book he should turn.

Right across Hollywood, as the films got worse, the dummies and the sex-bombs came into their own, while the actresses dropped deeper into limbo. Considering the magnitude of the luminary he is celebrating, it might seem funny to Mailer if one were to mention the names of people like, say, Patricia Neal, or (even more obscure) Lola Albright. Soon only the most fanatic of students will be aware that such actresses were available but could not be used. It's not that history has been rewritten. Just that the studio-handout version of history has been unexpectedly confirmed—by Norman Mailer, the very stamp of writer who ought to know better. The studios created a climate for new talent that went on stifling the best of it until recent times. How, for example, does Mailer think Marilyn stacks up against an artist like Tuesday Weld? By the criteria of approval manifested in *Marilyn,* it would be impossible for Mailer to find Weld even mildly interesting. To that extent, the senescent dream-factories succeeded in imposing their view: first of all on the masses, which was no surprise, but now on the elite, which is.

MAILER is ready to detect all manner of bad vibes in the 50's, but unaccountably fails to include in his read-out of portents the one omen pertinent to his immediate subject. The way that Hollywood divested itself of *intelligence* in that decade frightened the civilized world. And far into the 60's this potato-blight of the intellect went on. The screen was crawling with cosmeticized androids. Not content with gnawing her knuckles through the long days of being married to a test pilot or the long nights of being married to a band leader, June Allyson sang and danced. Betty Hutton, the ultimate in projected insecurity, handed over to Doris Day, a yelping freckle. The last Tracy-Hepburn comedies gurgled nostalgically in the straw like the lees of a soda. The new Hepburn, Audrey, was a Givenchy clothes-horse who piped her lines in a style composed entirely of mannerisms. And *she* was supposed to be class. Comedy of the 30's and 40's, the chief glory of the American sound cinema, was gone as if it had never been. For those who had seen and heard the great Hollywood high-speed talkers (Carole Lombard, Irene Dunne, Rosalind Russell, Katharine Hepburn, Jean Arthur) strut their brainy stuff, the let down was unbelievable. Comic writing was pretty nearly wiped out, and indeed has never fully recovered as a genre. In a context of unprecedented mindlessness, Marilyn Monroe rose indefatigably to success. She just wasn't clever enough to fail.

Marilyn came in on the 50's tide of vulgarity, and stayed to take an exemplary part in the Kennedy era's uproar of cultural pretension. Mailer follows her commitment to the Actors' Studio with a credulousness that is pure New Frontier. The cruelty with which he satirizes Arthur Miller's ponderous aspirations to greatness is transmuted instantly to mush when he deals with Mrs. Miller's efforts to explore the possibilities hitherto dormant within her gift. That such possibilities existed was by no means taken as gospel at the time of her first forays into New York, but with the advent of the Kennedy era the quality of skepticism seemed to drain out of American cultural life. *Marilyn* is a latter-day Kennedy-era text, whose prose, acrid with the tang of free-floating charisma, could have been written a few weeks after Robert Kennedy's death rounded out the period of the family's power. Mailer's facility for confusing the intention with the deed fits that epoch's trust in façades to perfection. He is delicately tender when evoking the pathos of Marilyn's anxious quest for self-fulfillment, but never doubts that the treasure of buried ability was there to be uncovered, if only she could have found the way. The true pathos—that she was simply not fitted for the kind of art she had been led to admire—eludes him. Just as he gets over the problem of Marilyn's intellectual limitations by suggesting that a mind can be occupied with more interesting things than thoughts, so he gets over the problem of her circumscribed accomplishments by suggesting that true talent is founded not on ability but on a state of being. Nobody denies that the snorts of derision which first greeted the glamor queen's strivings toward seriousness were inhuman, visionless. In rebuttal, it was correctly insisted that her self-exploration was

* Arlington House, 1971.

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the exercise of an undeniable right. But the next, fatal step was to assume that her self-exploration was an artistic activity in itself, and had a right to results.

SCATTERED throughout the book are hints that Mailer is aware that his loved one had limited abilities. But he doesn't let it matter, preferring to insist that her talent—a different thing—was boundless. Having overcome so much deprivation in order to see that certain kinds of achievement were desirable, she had an automatic entitlement to them. That, at any rate, seems to be his line of reasoning. A line of reasoning which is really an act of faith. The profundity of his belief in the significance of what went on during those secret sessions at the Actors' Studio is unplumbable. She possessed, he vows, the talent to play Cordelia. One examines this statement from front-on, from both sides, through a mirror, and with rubber gloves. Is there a hint of a put-on? There is not. Doesn't he really mean something like: she possessed enough nerve and critical awareness to see the point of trying to extend her range by playing a few fragments of a Shakespearean role out of the public eye? He does not. He means what he says, that Marilyn Monroe possessed the talent to play Cordelia. Who, let it be remembered, is required, in the first scene of the play, to deliver a speech like this:

Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Leave aside the matter of how she would have managed such stuff on stage; it is doubtful she could have handled a single minute of it even on film: not with all the dialogue coaches in the world, not even if they had shot and edited in the way Joshua Logan is reputed to have put together her performance in some of the key scenes of *Bus Stop*—word by word, frame by frame. The capacity to apprehend and reproduce the rhythm of written language just wasn't there. And even if we were to suppose that such an indispensable capacity could be dispensed with, there would still be the further question of whether the much-touted complexity of her character actually contained a material resembling Cordelia's moral steel: it is not just sweetness that raises Cordelia above her sisters. We are bound to conclude (if only to preserve from reactionary scorn the qualities Marilyn really *did* have) that she was debarred from the wider range of classical acting not only by a paucity of ability but by a narrowness of those emotional resources Mailer would have us believe were somehow a substitute for it. Devoid of invention, she could only draw on her stock of feeling. The stock was thin. Claiming for her a fruitful complexity, Mailer has trouble conjuring it up: punctuated by occasional outbreaks of adoration for animals and men, her usual state of mind seems to have been an acute but generalized fear, unreliably counterbalanced by sedation.

Mailer finds it temptingly easy to insinuate that Marilyn's madness knew things sanity wots not of, and he tries to make capital out of the tussle she had with Olivier in *The Prince and the Showgirl.* Olivier, we are asked to believe, was the icy technician working from the outside in, who through lack of sympathy muffed the chance to elicit from his leading lady miracles of warm intuition. It's a virtuoso passage from Mailer, almost convincing us that an actor like Olivier is a prisoner of rationality forever barred from the inner mysteries of his profession. You have to be nuts, whispers Mailer from the depths of his sub-text, to be a *real* actor. The derivation from Laing's psychology is obvious.

THE author does a noble, loyal, zealous job of tracing his heroine's career as an artist, but we end by suspecting that he is less interested in her professional achievement than in her fame. The story of Norma Jean becoming Somebody is the true spine of the book, and the book is Mailer's most concise statement to date of what he thinks being Somebody has come to mean in present-day America. On this theme, *Marilyn* goes beyond being merely wrong-headed and becomes quite frightening.

As evidence of the leverage Marilyn's fame could exert, Mailer recounts a story of her impressing some friends by taking them without a reservation to the Copacabana, where Sinatra was packing the joint to the rafters every night. Marilyn being Monroe, Sinatra ordered a special table put in at his feet, and while lesser mortals were presumably being asphyxiated at the back, he sang for his unexpected guest and her friends, personally. Only for the lonely. Mailer tells such stories without adornment, but his excitement in them is ungovernable: it infects the style, giving it the tone we have come to recognize from all his previous excursions into status, charisma, psychic victory, and the whole witchcraft of personal ascendancy. *Marilyn* seems to bring this theme in his work to a crisis.

In many ways *The Naked and the Dead* was the last classic novel to be written in America. The separately-treated levels of the military hierarchy mirrored the American class structure, such as it was, and paralleled the class structure of the classic European novel, such as it had always been. With *Deer Park* the American classes were already in a state of flux, but the society of Hollywood maintained cohesion by being aware of what

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conditions dictated the mutability of its hierarchy: Sergius the warrior slept with Lulu the love queen, both of them qualifying, while fortune allowed, as members of the only class, below which was the ruck—the unlovely, the unknown, the out. *Deer Park* was Mailer's last attempt to embody American society in fictional form: *An American Dream* could find room only for its hero. Increasingly with the years, the broad sweep of Mailer's creativity has gone into the interpretation of reality as it stands, or rather flows, and he has by now become adept at raising fact to the level of fiction. Meanwhile society has become even more fluid, to the extent that the upper class —the class of celebrities—has become as unstable in its composition as the hubbub below. Mailer's celebrity class is an Einsteinian universe, as opposed to the Newtonian universe of Europe and the older America, whose predictable mechanics sustained the classic novel. Transformation and displacement now operate endlessly, and the observer (heady prospect) changes the thing observed. Mailer's tendency to enroll himself in even the most exalted action is based on the perception, not entirely crazed, that the relative positions in the star-cluster of status are his to define: reality is a novel that he is writing.

On her way to be divorced from Arthur Miller, Marilyn stopped off in Dallas. In Dallas! Mailer can hardly contain himself. "The most electric of the nations," he writes, "must naturally provide the boldest circuits of coincidence." Full play is made with the rumors that Marilyn might have had affairs with either or both of the two doomed Kennedy brothers, and there is beetle-browed speculation about the possibility of her death having placed a curse on the family—and hence, of course, on the whole era. Mailer himself calls this last brainwave "endlessly facile," thereby once again demonstrating his unfaltering dexterity at having his cake and eating it. But this wearying attempt to establish Marilyn as the muse of the artist-politicians is at one with the book's whole tendency to weight her down with a load of meaning she is too frail to bear. Pepys could be floored by Lady Castlemaine's beauty without ascribing to her qualities she did not possess. The Paris intellectuals quickly learned that Pompadour's passion for china flowers and polite theater was no indication that artistic genius was in favor at Versailles —quite the reverse. Where hierarchies were unquestioned, realism meant the ability to see what was really what. Where the hierarchy is created from day to day in the mind of one man interpreting it, realism is likely to be found a hindrance.

Mailer doesn't want famous people to mean as little as the skeptical tongue says they do. To some extent he is right. There *is* an excitement in someone like Marilyn Monroe coming out of nowhere to find herself conquering America, and there *is* a benediction in the happiness she could sometimes project from the middle of her anguish. Without Mailer's receptivity we would not have been given the full impact of these things; just as, if he had listened to the liberal line on the space program, we would not have been given those enthralling moments in *Of a Fire on the Moon* when the launch vehicle pulls free of its bolts, or when the mission passes from the grip of the earth into the embrace of its target—moments as absorbing as our first toys. Mailer's shamelessness says that there are people and events which mean more than we in our dignity are ready to allow. He has nearly always been right. But when he starts saying that in that case they might as well mean what he wants them to mean, the fictionalist has overstepped the mark, since the patterning that strengthens fiction weakens fact.

MAILER'S Marilyn is a usurper, a democratic monarch reigning by dint of the allegiance of an intellectual aristocrat, the power of whose regency has gone to his head. Mailer has forgotten that Marilyn was the people's choice before she was his, and that in echoing the people he is sacrificing his individuality on the altar of perversity. Sergius already had the sickness:

> Then I could feel her as something I had conquered, could listen to her wounded breathing, and believe that no matter how she acted other times, these moments were Lulu, as if her flesh murmured words more real than her lips. To the pride of having so beautiful a girl was added the bigger pride of knowing that I took her with the cheers of millions behind me. Poor millions with their low roar!

At the end of *Deer Park* the dying Eitel tells Sergius by telepathy that the world we may create is more real to us than the mummery of what happens, passes, and is gone. Whichever way Sergius decided, Mailer seems finally to have concluded that the two are the same thing. More than any of his essays so far, *Marilyn* tries to give the mummery of what happens the majestic gravity of a created world. And as he has so often done before, he makes even the most self-assured of us wonder if we have felt deeply enough, looked long enough, lived hard enough. He comes close to making us doubt our conviction that in a morass of pettiness no great issues are being decided. We benefit from the doubt. But the price he pays for being able to induce it is savage, and Nietzsche's admonition is beginning to apply. He has gazed too long into the abyss, and now the abyss is gazing into him. Bereft of judgment, detachment, or even a tinge of irony, *Marilyn* is a sumptuous but slavish expression of an empty consensus. The low roar of the poor millions is in every page.

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On Jealousy

Leslie H. Farber

To see one's mate across a crowded room, doing something else, with someone else, is to be forcibly reminded of the separateness of our lives, however persuasive may be the imagery of connection and joined fates when we are together. If one's own presence or even existence seems merely inessential to the activity we see our mate engaged in, the sense of separation may be easy to bear. If, however, we experience a suspicion that our presence or existence would be inconvenient, even offensive, to the occasion, our reaction is darker, full of dread.

Jealousy is a condition which Webster defines as that state of mind arising from the suspicion, apprehension, or knowledge of the unfaithfulness of a wife, husband, or lover; or the fear or actuality of being supplanted in the affections of another. At its most unambiguous jealousy is a reaction to a real displacement in affection or an unmistakable infidelity committed by one's mate. *A* reaction or *the* reaction Webster doesn't make clear. My own feeling is that jealousy is *a* reaction, one of several possibilities, although certainly the most common, the most expected, among them. I will have something to say about other responses a little later.

For the moment let us consider the more ambiguous situation in which jealousy arises from a suspicion of infidelity or displacement or—to come closer to our most ordinary experience—from an *intimation* of something even more general: let us call it betrayal. One is compelled, say, to witness from afar or to remember or to imagine (hint and rumor operate here) some action or inclination on the part of one's mate that is disturbing enough to cause a strong reaction and a marked change of course in relation to the world. One acknowledges (to oneself) that reaction as a flurry of jealousy, without identifying the behavior of one's mate as actual displacement or infidelity. The matter of unfaithfulness cannot be restricted to literal sexual infidelity. Perhaps an habitually jealous person will make a rapid extrapolation to a clandestine sexual union, actual or imminent, but for most of us, unfaithfulness, or what is regarded as unfaithfulness, need not be writ large for it to be constitutive, on the one hand. of our mate's availability to intimacy with others, and, on the other hand, of our loss of exclusive claim to such intimacy.

It should be noted that prior to the moment of the onset of jealousy the matter of exclusiveness was not active in our consciousness, although in retrospect we might assert it was assumed or taken for granted. This retrospective rumination belongs to the phenomenology of jealousy. "If I have lost what I had, what was it I had?" and "If I am now a different person, how am I different?" And further, "If it is jealousy I am feeling, why can't I say so and have done?" Why indeed? Yet one seldom does. One raises the issue, but furtively, pretending not to. One interrogates, but affects whatever tone one can command—annoyance, indifference, umbrage, solicitude—to deny one's predicament. And one's mate, in response, offers equal dissembling. Lying answers to lying questions. Jealousy is concealed in the question, evasion in the response. Those with long experience in parrying the jealous intrusions of mate (or parent) soon acquire the habit of disowning or even disparaging any affectionate tie. This is to say that both jealousy and the response to jealousy proceed along paths of indirection.

Why is this so? Why must jealousy pretend to be other than it is? The provocation may be slight or massive, but every jealous person knows jealousy to be a brutally degrading experience and resists with all his might revealing the extent of his degradation. (Even a confession of jealousy, when other strategies seem inappropriate, may be used in an attempt to repudiate the state itself.)

Obviously pride makes humiliating the admission of all manner of human weakness—lying, conceit, malice, etc.; but such admissions contain the possibility that the confessor will stay larger than his sin. Such comforting contrast between himself and his jealousy is beyond the reach of the jealous person for, subjectively at least, he *is* his malady: to describe his jealousy is to illuminate his reduction as a human being.

In general I believe that jealousy, when it is not used to mean either envy or zeal—these are possible uses of the word, but since each has its

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own serviceable synonym neither will be considered here—jealousy, that portion of meaning without synonym, is experienced in essentially similar fashion by men and women alike. Essentially, but not entirely. There are, I suspect, innate differences. Certainly there are cultural ones.

In terms of history and tradition women's jealousy has been given very little in respect or credence, in contrast to the considerable weight credited to both the suspicions and rages of men. A jealous man is often considered to be asserting his possessive rights; jealousy in a woman is regarded as nearly equivalent to shrewishness, fishwifery. The jealousy of the man has, as well, been given striking sanction within the community. In the time of Moses (as described in Numbers 5) evidence against a woman suspected of infidelity needed to consist of no more than unfounded (the text is explicit on this point) jealous suspicion on the part of her husband for her to be subjected to a trial by ordeal whose result, one must conclude, had to be of dubious fairness to the innocent. On the issue of the legitimacy of the man's jealousy—or of any consequences to him of the wife's proven innocence—the passage is silent.

Throughout history the sexual infidelity of women has been punished far more harshly than that of men, ranging from social ostracism to banishment to death, and including the occasional American Indian practice of amputating the nose of an unfaithful wife.

Traditional assumptions about jealousy are also interesting. A man is cuckolded; a woman is unfortunate. The wife's infidelity strikes at her husband's honor and pride, it humiliates him. The husband's infidelity, however much it hurts his wife, need not humiliate or dishonor her; it reflects upon him rather than her, whereas hers also reflects upon him.

In short, history would seem to be telling us that a man has much more to lose from his mate's infidelity than a woman has, and that his vulnerability must be well protected by law and custom. Whether there is any truth to this or not, traditional practice has clearly been most unfair to women. However, I doubt if history's legitimation of male jealousy has had either a consoling or an improving influence upon men. If virtue is its own reward, jealousy is its own punishment, though not, frequently, its only one.

But is there, we must now ask, any truth reflected in or represented by the cruel practices and assumptions of history? Do male and female jealousy differ in any important way? My impression is that they do, and I would propose that the difference is this: while men and women alike fear both displacement of a mate's affection and his or her sexual infidelity, a woman is more apt to conceive of the larger picture and fear displacement; a man is more likely to center his attention on the sexual fact. For her the sexual betrayal is emblematic; it refers to the larger replacement. For him the sexual betrayal is constitutive; it represents the larger replacement, at the same time that it stands for itself.

We may better understand the difference of emphasis upon sexual jealousy if we consider briefly the difference between the male and female experience of sex.

The act of sex, for the male, is a contained event. Its onset of desire, or need, or even compelling urgency, its crescendo of development and its final climax and rapid dénouement, constitute a drama of rise and fall which is literally transforming. Physiologically and psychologically, visibly and spiritually, he is changed. His disinclination to linger at the scene of his transformation, usually felt and expressed as an abrupt urge to turn his attention elsewhere, to rejoin the world, is not a failure of affection on his part or a wishful repudiation of his larger tie to his mate—although it is sometimes so interpreted by her. One of the reasons whores may please a man is that they too, though for reasons more professional than natural, prefer to minimize post-climactic cuddling of either a consoling or a celebrating nature.

Whores aside, a woman's experience of the act of sex is different. For her the event may be entered into with, or arise out of, desire—though seldom the undistractable urgency men sometimes feel—but desire is not necessary to her participation. The conclusion of sex, whether she is technically fulfilled or not, represents no decisive change in her being. The sexual event takes its place along—and derives much of its significance from—the continuity of the life of affection she and her mate lead together. (If it is essentially a life of *dis*affection, that will change the nature and mood and significance of sex, but not its place within continuity.) Because she is not transformed, and particularly when the experience has been satisfying, her inclination, unlike his, is to prolong the dénouement of passion in order specifically to mark the relation of sex to the larger affection they share. There is some sense, too, in which she understands the significance of his transformation, and wishes to console him with her undiminished affection. This is not the moment, however, for him to mark the connection between sex and love. His moment is more likely to occur with the onset of sexual desire and its focusing on his mate.

In sex, then, the woman consumes without being consumed. Jargon has it that a man "takes" a woman, "has" her. In reality it is she who "has" him. She uses him up—renders him, for the moment at least, incapable of any further sexual activity. In this sense (which of course is illusory) she "possesses" him. But sex does not use

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her up—it does not change her. It may exhaust her, it may fulfill her, it may do both. But neither condition—total fulfillment only dramatizes this difference—makes it impossible for her (potentially) to continue to function sexually, with or without desire. Theoretically, she is still available: he never succeeds in conclusively possessing her.

Now what does all this mean in relation to sexual jealousy? Sex for the man is a drama of conquest and withdrawal. The territory is never won but to be lost again. Since he can never possess her absolutely he must possess her exclusively. For her to act on her potentially continuous availability would be to defile his manhood, his vulnerable and self-renewing manhood, which he entrusts to her discretion. Not only a man's experience of sex but also the nature of his sexual parts induce him to be more literal about sex than a woman, both whose experience and parts lead her in an opposite direction. In terms of betrayal, the ultimate betrayal for him, therefore the focal one, is sexual. For her, sex is less literal, less isolated. She naturally sets it—as she experiences it—in a larger picture. For her the ultimate betrayal is her displacement from that larger picture, her banishment from the *ground* of her life with her mate, which to a considerable degree may constitute her groundedness in the world. (A career, incidentally—an alternative groundedness in the world which does not include her mate—appears to offer some sort of protection against this fear of displacement. However, it is no simple solution. It makes some things easier, some harder. And it guarantees nothing at all to the actual torments of jealousy.) In view of this more diffuse apprehension of displacement on the woman's part, she tends to find more occasion for jealousy that is not specifically sexual than the man does. She may become jealous of his friends, family—even their children, and even his absorption in work, hobbies, TV, etc. This female sort of jealousy is always surprising to the man; it is, by and large, outside his own experience, and catches him unawares.

I do not, let me make plain, think that a man's sexual infidelity is not painful and devastating to his mate. As I said, history has been brutal and unfair. Women do indeed suffer horribly at both actual and suspected sexual betrayal, and very little respect has been granted their anguish. Worse yet, the popular assumptions about the difference of the *response* of men and women to the infidelity of a mate have never given women proper credit. The difference, of course, well documented and long assumed, is that women tend to forgive sexual infidelities, and men don't. It is true enough. So intransigent indeed are men on this point that uncomplicated forgiveness for sexual betrayal from a man immediately arouses suspicion. From a woman it is often accepted with minimal comment or gratitude. The usual explanations offered for this difference contain elements of truth: Women care, but not in the same way men do; women care, but they are dependent, what can they do?; women care, but they have a powerful urge to preserve the family, the home; and women are simply and by nature more forgiving than men. In my view, allowing for the portion of accuracy contained in all of the above, the difference of response of men and women to sexual betrayal is essentially to be found in the particular nature of their sexual experience.

Let us return to an investigation of the jealous state as it is experienced by men and women alike. What sets jealousy apart from other possible responses to a real or imagined infidelity—such as rage or grief—is its quality of obsession. (This is not to say that jealousy is not full of both rage and grief, but that rage and grief, and even resignation, each in its own right, need not be obsessive.) Literally, obsession means being oppressed or besieged, as if by an evil spirit. On the one hand, one wills one's obsession to disappear, thereby ensuring its perpetuation. On the other hand, the obsession *is* the condition of the will—simultaneously assertive and impotent, simultaneously frenzied and paralyzed. The role of the will here is crucial. Whether one is alone or with others, whether one rages or is silent, berates one's mate with questions and accusations or refrains from berating one's mate with questions and accusations, the internal drama remains the same: the will has become fixed in a rigid orbit of injury—it spins and burns, but cannot escape its tiny, terrible sphere.

Obsession being so poignantly lonely a condition, the opportunity to engage one's mate, either beseechingly or angrily, on the subject of one's injury is constantly tempting. At least one's obsession can assume the illusion of dialogue—one can talk it over with its object. The obsessed one craftily guards himself* in this enterprise, however, for harsh words and excessive demands may drive his mate away, and that deprivation would be the ultimate horror.

In the grip of jealous passion one's state is reduced to a kind of craven non-being. One strives to appear to be the person he was, but he knows that he has lost his autonomy—his sense of self—and has become a slave whose diminished existence is at the mercy of his mate. His human space has shrunk to the narrow

* The language of sexual neutrality is impossible to sustain gracefully beyond a certain point. I will therefore generally be using the masculine pronoun, but I ask the reader to bear in mind that I am speaking in this section—and, except when otherwise explicitly indicated, throughout this essay—of jealousy as experienced by men and women alike.

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boundaries of the jealous melodrama in which he must perform. The world beyond those boundaries seems utterly alien, unreal, and his participation in it—insofar as it is compelled—will strike him not as reassuring and comforting, but hollow and mocking.

Nor can he bear for the object of his jealousy to step outside the boundaries of this melodrama. He may tell himself that it is his suspicion of possible or further infidelity that requires his mate to be visibly and audibly within reach (phones are crucial, the mails will no longer serve). But the fact is that his tie to his oppressor has become so tortured and so fragile that it must depend on the most literal sensory validation. Once the mate goes through the door, moves outside the allotted space, the jealous one dies; the mate holds, in the shift and attention of his or her very eye, the power to grant or withhold the permission to be. Small wonder that jealousy contains so striking a portion of anger. In his desperate need to prove the unprovable—namely affection, both his own and his mate's—he wills what cannot be willed, demanding an enactment of relation that can only be grotesque in its deceits and disgusts. Although the issue of "love" may be raised again and again as he implores and interrogates and she demonstrates and defends, it must be pointed out that neither one at this moment is morally qualified to use the term at all. His is a despairing dilemma; he is driven to prove an infidelity he cannot tolerate and is unable to prove a fidelity he so obsessively requires. No gesture of hers is reassuring enough, and, insofar as he perceives the inevitably forced and willed nature of her performance (it is very rare that a fit of jealousy, whatever the provocation, is met with an outpouring of love from a guileless heart), every gesture of hers confirms his suspicions. In this way jealousy is self-confirming; it breeds itself. And when evidence is offered, as it often is, that his jealousy is inappropriate, uncalled for—and unquestionably damaging to the relationship—does he subside, satisfied? Does he abandon his jealousy willingly and with relief? Far from it. For one thing, evidence, like for instance, is not proof. More importantly, jealousy is not only passionate but imperious; it treasures its own being, and in a sense forces its host to do so too. In no simple way (such as: you were wrong all along) will this state of torment and anguish give up its claims or its existence.

Not even the idea of the harm he is *causing* will sober someone in a jealous fury. In fact, such a notion will more likely enrage than restrain him. The experience of jealousy always includes so strong a conviction of *being injured* that it is most unusual for the jealous person to be able to consider the injury his jealousy causes to others. For this reason, the real guilt that is jealousy's inevitable consequence is seldom acknowledged by a jealous person; it is obliterated by his overriding absorption in his own injury.

THE ROLE of the rival (or suspected rival) has some importance in jealousy. If he or she is unknown or barely known, one's speculations as to his or her nature will cover a large range of qualities, as one futilely searches for just that combination that will reduce the jealous imperative. In point of fact there is no ideal rival, one that makes jealousy an easy condition to bear. If he or she is believed to be an enormously superior, attractive creature, envy and bitter self-doubt are joined to jealousy. On the other hand, if one regards the rival as a trivial, inferior person, one's pain is not much assuaged, for this makes the involvement of one's mate all the more dismaying, shocking. However one conceives the rival, the illusion persists that a different sort of rival would ease the situation. By and large this is not true.

However much or little is known about the rival, the jealous person makes an attempt to see that rival as the seducer, the initiator of whatever has taken or is taking place—from mild flirtation to actual betrayal—between him or her and the mate. This view of the mate as victim offers the possibility of reconciliation, even forgiveness, or, more bleakly, perhaps merely rationalizes one's jealous efforts to possess again what has been lost. Most importantly this interpretation permits the jealous one to dismiss from his mind the maddening image of his mate freely undertaking—even initiating—an unfaithful act.

An unknown rival is distressing enough; when the rival is—or has been—the jealous one's friend, good friend, even best friend (this is not so rare as one would like to believe), the situation turns drastic. In the case of an actual infidelity between the mate and the friend, this double betrayal, the shattering of the worlds of both love and friendship, constitutes a virtually intolerable burden of demoralization and pain. (The messy complexity of motives in these situations of multiple betrayal sometimes seems to suggest that jealousy may have been as much a cause as a consequence of the betrayal.) Again one tries to fix the blame on one or the other—most likely on the friend—in order to salvage something of the remaining relation. However, one is also tempted and crazed by visions of revenge. With so much of the world now lying in pieces, one yearns to make the destruction absolute—if only one could somehow be sure, oneself, of surviving, to witness the desolation.

As the jealous person's obsession grows, he finds himself seized by visual reenactments of his injury, usually fragmentary. They may involve plots of revenge against his rival, and these may be spun out endlessly. Or the fragment may fasten wrathfully on the intrigue and deceits that led

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to the bedding down. But as he approaches the act itself, he will almost physically interrupt the vision because it seems too dreadful to endure. At this point his very jealousy convinces him, however, that he must master his dread and view the literal sexual possession in its entirety before there can be any turning back—or turning away. We can see the obsessional workings of jealousy in this conviction because it represents such a defeat of imagination, one of whose functions is to guide the movements of one's attention. The imagination *not* to imagine is an important power of intelligence, disabled here by the seeming necessities of obsession. In his repeated interrogations of his mate he may press for sexual details that will do justice to the movie in his head that lies at the center of his jealousy and that he cannot bring himself to witness. What he cannot bear is opposition, whether it be silence or a remark that questions the validity of the interrogation itself. Should she ask, "What difference do the details make?" he will understand her question as evasion, for he knows it is precisely such details that *do* matter and have become the measure of his fate. And yet from time to time there will be the flickering realization that there can be no end to his craving for such details, for they will never yield the certainty he believes he requires. Still, any particulars she offers, out of anger or compliance, will be seized upon and elaborated in his home movie, so that his obsession assaults him with sexual scenes he would avoid if he could.

Though this home movie remains necessarily incomplete, its impulse is essentially cinematic in form (no still shots will do) and pornographic in content, having some resemblance to commercial pornographic films that portray, with a minimum of artifice, all the sexual posturings within reach of human bodies.

I SUSPECT that pornographic movies of the solitary, secret, home variety long preceded the commercial venture. Admittedly lust is the more common author of pornography, but jealousy has not been given sufficient credit. Can a distinction be made between these two states of mind on the basis of the images they inspire? Both may be obsessive, in that their presence causes other human considerations to evaporate. The difference that immediately springs to mind is that the home movie whose author is jealousy has an unhappy ending, in that possession belongs to another, while lust's movie allows its audience the happy illusion of sexual possession. Though the difference is critical, the fact remains that the erotic materials of both movies are similar. I have labored the comparison in order to stress a paradoxical point about one's jealous imaginings: namely, that in the midst of his painful movie sequence, anguished though he be, he may find himself sexually aroused by this objective view of his mate as naked actress. His arousal is, of course, reinforced by the possessiveness of jealousy, under whose simplifying, crudifying provenance such need for possession turns literally physical. Sexual union now offers his main illusion, however brief, that he can possess his mate. These paradoxical surges of desire, in the midst of reduction and alienation, may be misconceived by either partner or both as a transcendent return to being-in-love and an escape from jealousy's claims. Because of this misconception, jealousy has brought about marriages that were ill-advised, and prevented the dissolution of relationships in which meaning had altogether failed.

Let me return again to the similarity between the jealous home movie and the commercial pornographic movie in order to ask what the latter offers the jealous man. Obviously for most men it offers erotic excitement in the guise of vicarious involvement with the sexual minglings of strangers, seeming to serve their lustful inclinations, even though the excitement be later discharged with their mates. But I have noticed that those who return again and again to hard-core pornography seem to be straining for a distance from the subject matter that places them beyond such inclinations, allowing them the critical detachment, say, of the ideal sex therapist or movie critic. Similarly, the jealous man hopes that immersion in the materials of his betrayal will lead to a mastery of its images, permitting him relief from his enslavement. His aim is to trivialize the details through repeated viewings.

So far as jealousy is concerned, sexual emancipation and the decline of censorship have proved to be a mixed blessing. It was inevitable, I think, that there should be a proliferation of experiments with "open marriage," swinging, wife-swapping, etc., all ideologized in the name of freedom from old-fashioned monogamous constraints. From this point of view, jealousy is an inherited encumbrance rather than an unpleasant given in human affairs. The proposed solution would seem to be a "hair of the dog" prescription: if the fear or knowledge of infidelity can bring such a painful state as jealousy, then infidelity must be legitimized and embraced in such a way as to undo the jealous impulse. By way of the same regimen of immersion, trivialization, and—it is hoped—mastery that encourages attendance at home or commercial pornographic movies, swingers, swappers, and partners in open-marriage would seem to be aiming at a similar state of desensitization: the achievement of an attitude toward, and practice of, sex that would combine total freedom with total invulnerability. It seems unlikely to me that such an ancient fox as jealousy will be so simple-mindedly outwitted. I suspect that the new permissiveness offers him a vastly enlarged arena for his operations. If the new generation is serious about its

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ambitions in relation to sex and serenity of mind, it may be forced to reinvent fidelity.

There is another affliction of passion which may be seen as a companion obsession to jealousy; that is the state called being-in-love. Unlike jealousy, about which, to my mind, there is really nothing redeeming to be said, being-in-love does have pleasures, even virtues, which can survive its transformation into some more reasonable relation. But the state of being-in-love itself is strikingly similar to jealousy. The imperative of total possession rules them both. In being-in-love each appropriates the other's history as painlessly as possible ("I want to know everything about you, but be careful with the details"), at the same time that they rush to develop their own history and mutuality together, metaphorically fortified by their restaurant, song, drink, movie, first fight, and so on. Not only do they merge their lives, loyalties, passions, but their beliefs, attitudes, and opinions must match as well. Any hint of imperfection in this fusion ("But you said you *did* think Woody Allen was America's most important comedian") causes crisis. The smallest real difference of opinion (compromise and accommodation are constant in this enterprise, so that dishonesty is never more than a sentence or two away) stands for the impossibility and unreality of the ideal of total mutual possession, and thus provokes jealousy, even in the absence of any rival whatsoever.

There is a blasphemous character to this endeavor, in which each singles the other out as an object of worship. To do this, and to be "worthy" of it, each implicitly yields—or tries to yield—up his separate existence to the exalted unity. He abandons—or tries to abandon—or tries to appear to abandon—his independence of spirit as though it were a false idol. Of course it doesn't work. No matter how willing, one can never totally possess or be totally possessed by another. But before disillusionment sets in, and while the inevitable interruptions of jealousy are serving, paradoxically, both to cripple but also to keep feverishly alive, being-in-love is often experienced as a miraculous rebirth, a time of exhilaration, inspiration, and ready transcendence, not to mention overstatement. Like jealousy, and all obsessions, it is addictive, requiring larger and larger doses of itself to satisfy the terms of its illusions.

Unlike jealousy, being-in-love can have a happy ending—happy continuing might be more accurate. The only happy ending to jealousy is, for whatever reason, its disappearance, experienced usually as something closer to relief, leaving, as it must, so much damage and unhappiness in its wake.

But it is possible for two people and their relation to survive being-in-love. With enough appetite for each other's company and enough hope in the possibilities for commonality that this life affords, they may go on to find a way of being together that includes being apart, a way that combines passionate affection with the reality of distance. A way that is also uncertain, vulnerable, and ever open to the contaminations of jealousy. There is no happy ending. But there is happy getting on with it.

WHAT can be said about the ground out of which jealousy springs? In his essay on the subject, Freud thought jealousy to be "one of those affective states, like grief, that may be described as normal." Moreover, he said, "if anyone appears to be without it, the inference is justified that it has undergone severe repression and consequently plays all the greater part in his unconscious mental life." Of "normal jealousy," having to do with the pain of the thought of losing the love object, he at first noted there was little to be said from the analytic point of view. But a few sentences later he located its origins in the Oedipus complex of "the first sexual period." In other words, adult jealousy, of the "normal or competitive" variety, was due to the childish jealousy of one's early sexual stirrings. There is no question that the latter precedes the former. But whether one is the cause of the other or is merely an early manifestation of the normal human inclination to jealousy is harder to say. What I have labeled as "sexual jealousy," Freud calls "projected" jealousy, being "derived in both men and women from their own actual unfaithfulness in real life or from impulses toward it which have succumbed to repression." Because fidelity, "especially that degree required in marriage, is only maintained in the face of continual temptation," asserts Freud, anyone who denies such temptations will look for "absolution of conscience" by making his partner responsible. Thus, "the person can justify himself . . . that the other is probably not much better than he is himself."

Freud must be admired for discerning that sexual or projected jealousy represents an illegitimate way of absolving one of bad faith, whether because of actual sexual infidelity or merely impulses toward infidelity that have been disowned or repressed. My criticism of Freud's view of jealousy has nothing to do with his clinical observation, which, in my experience, has unmistakable though partial truth; rather it is that his theory is too circumscribed, thus failing to account for the ground out of which jealousy erupts, often surprisingly, with little or no provocation. To consider this issue, I must now discuss the relation between jealousy and promiscuity.

I use promiscuity here in its original meaning, namely an "indiscriminate mingling"—primarily in one's dealings with others, of course, but also in relation to ideas, emotions, morals, etc. Thus, sexual infidelity would be but an instance of

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promiscuity. Though my emphasis here will be the experience of a developing promiscuity, flagrant examples of the full-blown variety in adult life are easily come by, examples in which the issue of promiscuity is unmistakable to the outsider. Particularly in public life do we see people whose necessity to join with their audience leads them to forget private doubts and settle on easy and optimistic pieties (including those labeled "The Tragic View of Life") which they buttress with indiscriminate bits and pieces of corroboration from anywhere and everywhere. But in their will to win quick admiration they often misjudge their hearers, or at least those among them whose convictions oppose such intellectual vulgarity. To the latter it may seem that promiscuity, having become a way of life, has resulted in a coarsening of previous discriminative powers, suggesting not that the promiscuous one has forgotten such possibilities, but rather that he is no longer capable of them. Using a sexual metaphor, we say he whores, though we may have trouble deciding whether he whores out of temporary necessity or out of acquired, hardened disposition. If we favor consistency, we may infer sexual promiscuity as well, identifying him as a seducer. This is frequently true, but not necessarily, for sexual fidelity or at least its appearances may be preserved either out of fear or some lingering sense of its value in the midst of a prevailing promiscuity.

Because we focus on the seductive overtures of these public figures we may fail to note the jealousy that inevitably accompanies their efforts. Should their audience become restless, should they yawn or doodle or whisper to each other, it is jealousy that prods these figures to ever more strenuous exertions to recapture their audience's devotion. It is as though, figuratively speaking, they were willing to undress, if nakedness would restore the attention they hunger for. But, as I have mentioned above, we will be struck more by the increasing vulgarity of their message than by the jealousy that drives them. Of course, winning one portion of the audience will antagonize another portion, bringing new jealousy in its wake. As a result they are driven to scatter their overtures, as though they would be everything to everyone—which in itself is a serviceable definition of promiscuity.

Do not be misled by my example, chosen only for its cartoon-like clarity. By no means do I mean it to acquit you and me of such ignoble strivings. In varying degree we have all, from an early age, had to confront promiscuity, both in inclination and actuality, our own and that of others.

As the child grows gradually aware of the absolute separateness of his being from all other beings in the world, he discovers that this condition offers both pleasure and terror. On the one hand he cherishes his separate, individual, regal self, and on the other he yearns for the loneliness of his autonomy to be relieved by relation with others.

The manner in which he seeks and finds such relief, and the manner in which those about him not only answer his overtures but also turn to him for their own consolation, will have considerable bearing on his interpretation of his (and their) condition—and his handling of it.

To the extent that he must—or believes that he must—toy with his own presentation of himself to others to earn the attention and approval he craves—and to the extent that he senses that those others are also busy with their own adjustments and accommodations, he will experience a queer, unnamable apprehension in regard to his worldly enterprise. This apprehension will, of course, proceed from, and present itself as, sensations of inadequacy, unacceptability, and so on, requiring an habitual dissembling on his part to render himself lovable. This uneasy state is both painful and corrupting, the pain and the corruption, it is commonly believed, being consequences of his low self-esteem and fear of others' indifference or rejection, which in turn causes him to project himself falsely. It is more likely, I think, that once this habit begins to harden the crucial source of his pain *is* his corruption. In his constant inability, or unwillingness, to tell the truth about who he is, he knows himself in his heart to be faking. If he suspects that those about him harbor a similar discrepancy between what they think and mean and what they say and do, this will offer not so much consolation as confirmation of his developing cynicism in regard to the life of affection, indeed in regard to life in general. As everything that can be is bought and sold, and the rest hidden, he may alternate between frantic activity in the market place and a savage repudiation of relational bargains altogether, this repudiation requiring of course its own sort of willing and dissembling. And as he performs some version of himself he hopes will win him the regard, the congratulation that is so essential to his very existence, he will attempt to persuade his audience of the absolute authenticity of his behavior—that is, much of his effort will be directed at denying the split that has prompted this impersonation. But the person to whom these efforts are principally addressed is himself.

Not merely is he ashamed of having and harboring a secret, unlovely, illegitimate self. The spiritual burden of not appearing as the person he "is," or not "being" the person he appears to be —the extended and deliberte confusion of seeming and being—is by and large intolerable if held in direct view. If the integrity he craves is to be denied him, at least he will have its illusion. If he cannot (he believes) publicize his private self, adjust his public gestures to conform with

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his private thoughts and feelings, then he will command his private self to conform to the public one; he will beguile his judgment into believing that what he says and does is what he thinks and means.

What this endeavor will do to his relation to truth may easily be imagined. Truth will be ever on his mind and never in his speech. He can neither fulfill it nor abandon it, but must always be striving for some irreproachable imitation.

Telling the truth is, to be sure, no simple thing. Sometimes it is uncalled for; often it is hard. But *telling* it is by no means always the most difficult aspect of truth. That may be *knowing* it. Ordinary people—you and I—not in the grip of an inner separation such as I have been describing, often encounter uncertainty and confusion in their efforts to reveal by word and gesture what they do actually think and feel. They, too, cherish their integrity, and tend to believe that what they say, by virtue of their saying it, does indeed accurately represent them. Often it is only later, when the moment has passed, that one realizes, gradually and grudgingly, that, for one reason or another, caught up in the occasion, one falsified. One spoke when silence would have been truer; one was silent when he should have spoken. One spoke, and aimed at the right meaning, but used words of the wrong color. And so on. Most of us do not habitually betray ourselves—or others—with sweeping deceits. We just crowd a little here and there, we make ourselves a bit more comfortable than our good sense or loyalties should permit, we take refuge in discretion—or we overrule an appropriate discretion in favor of some fleeting self-indulgence justified as "straight-talk" or, indeed, "truthfulness." One way and another we compromise in tiny steps until, we come to realize—perhaps with a shock—we are standing on alien ground. To make such discoveries, and to retrace our steps, it is essential not to be wilfully caught up in sustaining an illusion of truth-telling. It is hard enough without it.

As for the child already steeped in separation and deception—or the adult who was once that child—what will be the condition of his belief in his ability, not merely to tell (or not to tell), but to know the truth? It will have been more or less forfeited. The aim of his will is the invention of a successful illusion. The actual ground he is standing on, having disappeared from his words, will also have passed from his attention. There are some things it is impossible both to do and at the same time to impersonate oneself doing. Speaking truthfully is one of them.

Whatever imagined unloveliness originally drove him into habitual deception in his relations with others becomes, in his own eyes, explicit and institutionalized, so to speak, by the habitual deception itself. How much more now, in the face of his recurring sensations of self-disgust, he must seek the reassuring approval of others. His own low self-regard is now diabolically joined to a craven dependence on the inflated regard of his fellows. It is as though he abandons his responsibility to assess his own standing in the world, capering madly before all those omnipotent others who have become his collaborators, his judges, and the keepers of his fate. His very reliance upon "regard" itself, to justify his existence, indicates the reduction of his being: he has lost that ground upon which he might stand to reveal—with speech or silence, action or withdrawal—who and what he is, according to his own counsel. With that loss of ground comes a pervasive suspicion of the legitimacy of his entire career in the world, indeed of his life. He has lost moral authority with himself, a condition he will encounter again and again, along with his sense of illegitimacy and his addiction to his "image" and his impersonation of "truth-telling"—in the inevitable jealousies that lie in store for a life on these terms.

Puberty, adolescence, and the beginnings of adult sexuality bring a new dimension to the problem of jealousy. In the midst of an ongoing maturation of physical and intellectual powers that enhance the capacity for separateness, self-sufficiency, and particularly the discriminations requiring distance for their fruition, the burst of sexuality provides new urgencies for union that seriously challenge the developing selfhood. The period is promiscuous in the original meaning of the term, it being a time when young people band together or hang around with each other on almost any pretext. Moreover, as I have recently written,* the undifferentiated lust that overwhelms the young man's consciousness is promiscuous in the sexual sense, in that it presses for discharge anywhere and everywhere, even in solitude with imaginary lovers. And the combination of lust and undifferentiated desire-to-be-desired that overcomes the young woman is also promiscuous in its own way. Each sexuality invites its own dissembling for its fulfillment, whether in the form of actual deceits or romantic and idealistic fictions. The well-known turbulence of the period is to be found in the alternation between infatuation and disillusionment, bad faith being the common experience at either pole.

I HAVE been describing the nature and development of what I call the *ground of jealousy*; that is, those hardened assumptions about oneself and the materials of one's life (not constituting but underlying and determining thoughts and attitudes and actions) which together produce a habit of promiscuity—a habit characterized by deceit, cynicism, and bad faith. Out of this ground, with its racking insufficiency of self and harsh dependence on the excessive re-

* "He Said, She Said," COMMENTARY, March 1972.

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gard of others—no degree of excess ever being truly adequate—springs again and again the inescapable jealousy that follows the failure of one person after another to fulfill the impossible demand: Make me whole.

This is the ground of habitual jealousy, and, obviously, I have pictured it at its most extreme. One may be rooted here for life; one may get free only to be drawn back from time to time; one may be no native, and yet pass this way in periods of duress. Some few have perhaps never sniffed this air at all. But impulses toward promiscuity (and I am still using the word in its largest sense) are probably not so utterly alien to most of us that we have not strayed close to this ground at one time or another, and borne the painful consequences.

Freud's notion of *projection* postulates an explicit, virtually mechanical displacement of an act or impulse from one person onto another. In my view such projection is but one representation —among many—of the connection between promiscuity and jealousy. One whose life is governed by a prevailing promiscuousness need not harbor the slightest inclination toward sexual infidelity to his mate to be seized with a tormenting jealousy in regard to her sexual conduct (which may be entirely above reproach). The self-doubt and self-disgust that are both antecedent and consequent to his promiscuity counsel him that of all creatures he is most unfortunate; all others have those precious spiritual commodities—integrity, independence, self-reliance, peace —he alone lacks. And at the same time the cynicism which has also a cause-and-effect relation to his promiscuity promises him that all hearts are ruled as his is: of that of which he is capable, all are capable. Cynicism, like its offspring, sentimentality, is a great leveler.

Needless to say, an occasional encounter with jealousy (provoked or not) is no clear indication of rotten moral fiber. (There are people with utterly destroyed moral fibers who are never jealous—but that is a curious condition outside the scope of this essay.) It is habitual jealousy that suggests the issue of promiscuity.

There is another perhaps peculiar aspect to habitual jealousy. An habitually jealous person is someone who lives with constant dishonesty. This dishonesty leads him into unlikely relationships. Lacking the courage or clarity to identify their essential meaninglessness and wrongness for his life, he may resort to something easy and known: that is, he may deliberately expose himself to jealousy, as a way of animating a dead thing, and postponing his inevitable repudiation of this relation. This is to say that habitual jealousy may often mask not only dishonesty, but also an essential failure of moral courage.

I have been speaking here as though it made little difference to the genesis and experience of jealousy whether it was provoked or not—whether it would be understood by an outsider to have "sufficient cause." This is both true and not true. Obviously, someone constantly plagued by jealous suspicions in the absence of provocation would seem to be exhibiting that sort of habitual jealousy that I have associated with a promiscuous nature.

(Incidentally, I do not think the promiscuity I have been discussing, whatever its range or degree in a given individual, is freely chosen—or freely abandoned. It is a deeply ingrained aspect of character whose origins probably reach far back into early life. One can, I think, in some cases, repudiate it and move beyond it, but that constitutes a significant transformation of character, and will very infrequently be achieved by a tidying up of, say, one's party behavior.)

But what of provoked jealousy, jealousy as a response to a real infidelity or threat of infidelity on the part of one's mate? As I mentioned earlier, jealousy is not the only possible response to such a situation. One may react with grief or rage or even forgiveness without having entertained jealousy at all. Jealousy, as I have described it, is an obsession; it is a state of virtual paralysis in which the will races around a single point. There may be—there usually is—a great deal of activity, but no essential action. In a state of jealousy one exhibits a curious inability to act on his options. Such real action as I have mentioned could take several forms: it might be a considered resolve to terminate the relationship. It might be a heartfelt resolve *not* to terminate the relationship, even though the provocation may have been actual and massive. In this case an essential action would require not only the desire but the capacity to forgive. Another form of essential action might be the illumination of one's own ground—one's own standing in the lists of good faith and fidelity.

Such actions may constitute alternatives to the state of jealousy; but they may also serve to rescue a jealous person from his static affliction. It is interesting that often, when some essential action is undertaken, jealousy tends to diminish, even to disappear.

It is no sure thing, however. Maddening though it may be, the truth is that there is no reliable cure for jealousy at all. There is no dependable, deliberate move one can make that will assuredly liberate him from his jealous enslavement.

Since the will *is* distractable, flurries of jealousy may come and go, giving way to this or that distraction, or to reassurance, or to decision—all without disturbing the ground of which I have spoken.

I have said there is no cure. And yet jealousy —habitual jealousy—does sometimes disappear. There is no cure, but people are cured. The ground can be illuminated, and its prisoners can be set free. It is rare, but it is not miraculous.

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Who Is Buckminster Fuller?

Sara Sanborn

BUCKMINSTER FULLER, according to Hugh Kenner's estimable new study, *Bucky,** has a collection of 3,500 clippings about himself, as well as 80,000 letters and virtually every other scrap of paper with his name on it that has ever come his way. Fuller apparently looks upon the collecting of Fulleriana as a public trust—he intends to leave the world a complete "Chronofile" of the life of a 20th-century man. For similar reasons—to estimate the impact on the public consciousness of the principles of universal evolution he has revealed—Fuller keeps close tabs on his own public success. An indefatigable maker of models and drawer of charts, he has constructed a linear graph showing the frequency of his own appearances in the press. After lying disappointingly close to the horizon for many years, the vital line began to rise gratifyingly and by now has doubtless run clear out of the picture. "This means that Buckminster Fuller is becoming ever more explicitly a part of everyone's experience of living in the 20th century, and we need not feel superior to the satisfaction this gives him." The recipient of numerous awards and medals, chiefly for architecture, a counselor to kings and cabinets, he was nominated in 1969 for the Nobel Prize. After lean and hungry years and repeated rebuffs and failures, Buckminster Fuller has become a fact of life, a name to conjure with. Everybody has heard of him. But—exactly who *is* Buckminster Fuller?

The inventor of the Geodesic Dome; that much everyone knows. And perhaps the most highly honored unread prophet in his country. On first looking into Fuller's formidable writings, one's immediate impulse is to look away and blink, and the next is to explode with irritation.

> The IN's are discontinuous. The OUT's are continuous. OUT is nothingness, nonexperience. Only the nonexperience nothingness infers a continuum. The nonevent continuum is the NOVENT. Inferentially, the NOVENT continuum permeates the finitely populated withinness and comprises the finite NOVENT WITHOUTNESS ("Planetary Planning (I)," *The American Scholar,* Winter 1970-71).

Coming upon Fuller's writings is like coming upon one of his domes for the first time, unwarned. Anything so strange, so unexpected, but so self-confident, must be taken seriously. Only where is the way in? Like the dome and like the Fuller universe, the writing is "organic" in the fashionable term, a complete system and, to the casual reader, a closed one. Says Robert W. Marks, editor of *Ideas and Integrities* (1963), a collection of autobiographical writings, "It assumes a committed earnestness on the part of the reader." Perhaps half of Fuller's published books are unedited transcripts of his five-hour lectures. Several more, including *Nine Chains to the Moon* (1971) and *No More Secondhand God* (1963), are collections of papers and occasional writing mainly dating from the late 1920's through the early 50's—a period in which he was less called upon as a lecturer than he is today. There is also *Intuition* (1973), his most recent and accessible book, which is entirely composed of Fuller "poetry"—lines of uneven length running down the left-hand margin. There are those who damn Fuller's poetry as typographical pretension and those who hail it as genius. He has called it "mental mouthfuls and ventilated prose," and that is probably the best description. Most of his writings deal with the same themes, often in the same language; he has returned over and over again to a core set of ideas that have apparently engrossed him for at least thirty years. And most of them feature sharp shafts directed at the body politic and stunningly apt metaphors, intermixed with long patches of the purely impenetrable.

For those with a limited amount of time or a low tolerance for frustration, the best way into Fuller is undoubtedly through Kenner. "A Guided Tour of Buckminster Fuller" is the subtitle of Kenner's study, and Kenner is a guide both knowledgeable and affable; sympathetic, leisurely, and with infinite patience to explain. He is to Fuller "the better craftsman," as T. S. Eliot said of Ezra Pound, after Pound had carved "The Waste Land" out of the monumental stuff of Eliot's unedited verse. "The century's most tireless explainer," Kenner calls Fuller, who now spends nearly 300 days each year jetting around the world to conferences and lectures,

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* Morrow, 338 pp., $7.95.

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where he proclaims the same gospel again and again, extemporizing variations on his favorite themes in verbal marathons. The first of many ironies surrounding Fuller is that Kenner is by far the more effective explainer of Fuller's own work.

AND the first of the many problems in discussing Fuller's work is to decide what to call it—and him. He himself would quickly point out that the desire to pin a label on him is a symptom of our age's unhealthy craving for specialization. (Not that he isn't quick with labels himself.) He would also be gleeful and triumphant at our difficulty in finding a name-tag for him. "I seem to be a verb," he has said. "I am not a thing—a noun."* (Yet a noun is the name not only of a thing but of a person.) "Architect" is the noun most would apply to him, but Fuller has no degree or license in architecture, nor in engineering, nor in any other field. (He does have a card in the machinists' union.) Born in 1895 to a family well-rooted in New England (Margaret Fuller, Emerson's friend, was his great-aunt), he followed three generations of his forebears to Harvard, but was expelled in 1914 for general irresponsibility. He then worked in a textile mill, served as a naval officer in World War I, held various managerial positions in business, and spent more time and money than he could afford writing massive, unreadable, and unpublished treatises on the universe, which he sometimes had printed at his own expense and sent off wholesale to important people.

For five years during the 20's, Fuller also tangled with the construction industry, attempting to manufacture and market a synthetic building material invented by his father-in-law. He quickly concluded that the building trades—*inefficient, irrational,* either disorganized or too highly organized by a cluster of overlapping unions—were the only significant area of modern life still largely unaffected by the Industrial Revolution. In 1927, partly through his own mismanagement and naiveté, he lost the fledgling company he had created. Broke, without a job, and with a wife and baby daughter, he considered whether he should commit suicide for his family's sake. Standing by a lake in Chicago, he concluded that, "I have faith in the integrity of the anticipatory intellectual wisdom which we may call 'God'" *(Ideas and Integrities).* He further concluded that God knew best "whether I may be of any value to the integrity of the universe." He decided to dedicate himself to understanding the meaning of his own varied and colorful experience, which he considered to be his only asset, and also "to peel off from conventional livelihood preoccupations and to enter into a period of research and development." As a first step, he undertook a two-year moratorium on speech. He concluded that *words* had gotten him into a good deal of trouble and that he would use them no more until he was quite certain of what they meant and that he was actually communicating with others. The language he has evolved since he felt it safe to speak again is a distinctive and personal one, with its own peculiar vocabulary and often creaky syntax.

Beginning in the 20's and continuing through the next three decades, he also turned his attention increasingly to making models and designs, devising the Dymaxion car, house, bathroom, and map which bemused futurist-minded Americans of the 30's and 40's. All of them were shaped according to his personal understanding of human needs and of space-and-motion principles; all of them incorporated unique advantages (the three-wheeled Dymaxion car could turn in a tight circle) and disadvantages (it also tended to head into cross-winds and needed an experienced sailor at the rudder); and all of them looked like no car, map, bathroom, or house ever seen before, which no doubt partly accounted for their failure to go into mass production in spite of Fuller's hard work and perennial optimism.

"INVENTOR," then, must be his title. But the only invention of his in wide use is the Geodesic Dome (50,000 "official" domes around the world, says Kenner, many of them climbing toys in playgrounds, plus an unknown number of others built by youthful communards and woods-dwellers), and it is not chiefly as an inventor that Fuller is now besought to lecture. Ezra Pound called him "friend of the universe, bringer of happiness, liberator." (A facsimile of the inscription in Pound's handwriting is rather puzzlingly found facing the title page in *Intuition.*) Kenner calls him "publicity agent for the universe," and unfriendly folk are discoverable who feel he explains it as though he had invented it. He calls himself a "comprehensive anticipatory design scientist," yet it is apparently many years since he has created new designs, and for a design scientist, he has written relatively little about design (and then as often as not about its philosophical and social implications) and a great deal about history, education, economics, religion, politics, and what is best described as "natural philosophy."

He has also written a great deal about geometry: about the qualities of structures in space; the nature of the "interaccommodative" forces that are given substance in structure; the elegant and economical patternings of energy that nature exhibits. Out of his musings on the properties of geometric figures, plane and three-dimensional, came the Dome, its near-relation the Tensegrity Sphere (tension + integrity), the Octet Truss, and the Tensegrity Mast designed by Kenneth

* Quoted in *I Seem to Be a Verb,* an amiable non-book, by Fuller with Jerome Agel and Quentin Fiore (Bantam, 1970, 192 pp. [to be read backwards and forwards], $1.65).

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Snelson, a student of Fuller's at Black Mountain College. All of them are compounded out of such quirky and interesting figures as the pentagon or the octahedron. All of them are complex, lacy structures that look as if they should fall down, but don't. (They achieve their stability not by weight, long associated in our minds with strength, but by the interplay of opposed forces, the two-way push most simply demonstrated in the arch and keystone.) All of them are based on figures and principles well known to the ancient Greeks and to all mathematicians since, but rarely given palpable shape by men obsessed with the square and the cube as models of reliability. So far, all of them except the Dome have found no practical application and are most likely to be met with in an art museum, and all of them are impossible to talk about without the use of drawings and elaborate explanations. The cardinal virtue of *Bucky,* a book whose airy strength is a compliment to its subject, is its ability to illustrate Fuller's "energetic" geometry.

The best summary title for Buckminster Fuller may in fact be "sage," and it is perhaps in the light of that title, and everything it suggests by way of cultural association, that we should study his theories and beliefs, the methods and materials he uses, the assumptions with which he begins, the sentiments and habits of mind he both calls forth and reinforces in his audience. But we must also take note of Fuller's own main answer to the question of what to call him: a "comprehensivist."

> In my way of thinking, the only reason that I am known at all is because I set about deliberately in 1927 to be a *comprehensivist* in the era of almost exclusive trending and formal disciplining toward specialization. Inasmuch as everyone else was becoming a specialist, I didn't have any competition whatsoever (*Utopia or Oblivion,* 1969).

II

To be a comprehensivist, as Fuller uses the word, means more than to be a jack-of-all-trades or even a Renaissance Man. It also means to be concerned with the large issues, the largest that can be imagined: What is the universe? And what is man's place in it? Nature intended men to be comprehensivists, Fuller believes; the "comprehensive, anticipatory, universal intellect" endowed mankind with Mind, the unique, metaphysical generalizing capacity, as well as with Brain, the physical, information-storage-and-retrieval system. The special-case contents of brain are scanned by mind in search of first principles. "My philosophy requires of me that I convert not only my own experiences but whatever I can learn of other men's experiences into statements of evolutionary trending," he has said, and:

> The most poetical experiences of my life have been those moments of conceptual comprehension of a few of the extraordinary generalized principles and their complex interactions which are apparently employed in the governance of universal evolution (*No More Secondhand God*).

Children, Fuller believes, are naturally and instinctively comprehensivists. "The child still wants to understand UNIVERSE and has *big* questions, and the teacher says, 'Never mind that . . . you learn the parts first . . . A.B.C. . . .' Then the child goes to college and never does get back to the whole."* The failure of grown-ups to answer their comprehensive questions fully and truthfully, Fuller thinks, is the major reason that children get "de-geniused."

Ideally, therefore, education should begin with "the inventory of all known, i.e., all as-yet-discovered, generalized principles and proceed from that whole to the realization of special cases" (*Earth, Inc.,* 1973). The large generalizations are to be discovered not by a careful stringing together of particulars, but by an intuitive leap of the mind out of experience. The principles thus discovered are then used to illuminate and organize the particulars. The chief danger of specialization is that it "tends to shut off the wide band tuning searches and thus to preclude further discovery of the all-powerful generalized principles" ("Planetary Planning").

To a college audience at Auburn University, Fuller explained the origins of specialization. In the dim past, he revealed, the "head-men"—those whose strength allowed them to seize power in the constant jungle-warfare that was life—found it useful to have "brain-slaves"—bright subjects who could make a better sword or understand the enemy's language. Eventually, the head-men founded Oxford University and similar institutions, the better to educate their brain-slaves in sinister specialties. And Oxford provided the model for American universities. "For years we couldn't have a school unless it was built in Georgian-style architecture or something like it. Whatever Oxford had, we had to have" (*Approaching the Benign Environment,* 1970).

The head-men and their clever slaves eventually took to the sea, realizing the vital importance of new worlds to conquer and of speed in reaching them. The daring pirates, a sort of secret, multi-national combine, established world-wide dominions, including the British Empire. They also invented the political state, to assure their possessions while they were off conquering more. "They said to the yokels, 'From now on this is called Italy and you are the head man and I want you to wear a lot of purple and gold and

* Quoted in *Buckminster Fuller to Children of Earth,* compiled and photographed by Cam Smith, Doubleday, 1972 (paper).

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make yourself very prominent, because I am not at all worried about you people here on the land. But I am worried about those other pirates.'" The cartel of head-men controlled the earth and concealed their own identities until the Great Depression. Then their empires fell apart and they were identified and discredited, and a new era began. "The voice of the common man had something to say that could be listened to. This voice had produced a Magna Carta and a Bill of Rights."

For all their depredations, the head-men and their brain-slaves produced an ever-accelerating number of important technological discoveries, and their decision to make themselves seafaring was of crucial importance. Fuller, who as a child summered on a New England island and who is an avid sailor (his racing sloop is named *Intuition*), has testified that ". . . ships, sailors and the sea/ Have been my greatest/ Teachers and conditioners" (*Intuition*). When a man is in the middle of the ocean, he has to learn how to do everything and take account of nature's forces to a degree never demanded of landsmen—to become, in short, a *comprehensivist*. From the experience of men with the ocean—and now with the air-ocean—has come much of our most useful technology—navigation, metal-alloying, refrigeration, radio, radar—which has been only slowly and grudgingly adapted for wider use by landlubbers wedded to the status quo. Shipbuilders of even such mammoth vessels as the *Queen Mary*, Fuller points out, make painstaking efforts to get the maximum return from their materials per pound of weight, while architects piling up brick and stone to accommodate perhaps fewer people than an ocean liner don't know within a thousand tons what their buildings weigh. (Fuller knows precisely the weight of one of his domes. It can be air-lifted into place and will then resist earthquakes and hurricanes better than a conventional structure weighing many times more, due to its designed-in strength.) One of Fuller's many beloved dualisms is that between creative, mobile sea-people and dull, plodding land-people with their myopic tendency toward specialization. In Fuller's vaguely Rousseauesque view, evil is almost invariably due to some mistaken *notion*, and half the evil in the world derives from specialization.

> Specialization has bred feelings of isolation, futility, and confusion in individuals. It has also resulted in the individual's leaving responsibility for thinking and social action to others. Specialization breeds biases, which ultimately aggregate as international and ideological discord, which in turn leads to war ("Planetary Planning").

War and other social ills such as tyranny also flow from another cause: "the scientifically discredited premise that there can never be enough life support for all" ("Planetary Planning"). Malthusians through the centuries (Malthus is a favorite Fuller enemy) have said, "It's them or us," and evolved their lethal specialties to decide the issue. If there were enough to go around, Fuller reasons, there would probably be no more war. And he is convinced there can be enough as soon as we get down to technological business and stop wasting our time looking for political solutions.

> . . . there is nothing in politics except knowing how to do without or taking it from one and giving it to the other. That is what the sociologists and politicians attempt to do. They still say it has to be just me *or* you (*Approaching the Benign Environment*).

Fuller would like to eliminate politics along with the political state—or else reduce politics to housekeeping functions along the lines of the stewardess who warns us to fasten our seat-belts. We must turn our attention to reforming the environment, he says over and over again, not to reforming human nature. Mankind's greatest benefactors, "the Leonardo-types," have been bent on transforming their surroundings rather than transforming people. There is only one revolution which will be welcome to all peoples, the Design Science Revolution which will guarantee enough of everything for everybody. Fuller believes we have already, often unconsciously, made a good start in that direction.

Throughout most of human history, he points out, only 1 per cent of human beings were able to enjoy life "success"—living out their natural life spans free of disease or dire poverty. For the 99 per cent life was short and painful. Since 1900, however, the number of "successful" people has risen to 40 per cent through the miracles of technology. Most often the life-giving technology has developed as a by-product of war, when we commit resources that in peacetime we insist we could not "afford"—and which we erroneously then charge up to the National Debt. But, Fuller insists, we can afford to do anything which we need to do and know how to do. A new economics, a new system of accounting is needed which understands that *wealth*—"augmented forward capability"—is really only energy shaped by knowledge. According to basic physical law, energy is neither created nor destroyed. And knowledge must always increase; even a failed experiment teaches us something—we cannot learn less. By applying knowledge to the abounding energy already supplied by the Universal Intelligence, we can bring about the Design Science Revolution and worldwide peace and prosperity.

> There is an inherently minimum set of essential concepts and current information conversance with which could lead to operating our planet Earth to the lasting satisfaction and health of all humanity ("Planetary Planning").

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Once again, we come back to first principles so often obscured by specialization; to those "statements of evolutionary trending." What are these golden concepts? What must we do to be saved?

First, we must learn to understand *synergy*, defined as *"Behaviors of a whole system/Unpredicted by the separate behaviors/Of any of its parts" (Intuition,* emphasis Fuller's). Fuller's favorite example of synergy is chrome-nickel-steel. Each of the metals in the alloy has a measurable strength defined as the pounds of tension it will bear before breaking; however, the strength of the alloy is greater than that of any of the constituents—and greater even than the sum of their strengths. When all of the components are brought together, something new and better is created. Similarly, examination of a magnet on the one hand and a bunch of iron filings on the other won't predict their behavior when they are combined. As the old saying has it, "It's bigger than both of us."

Synergy is of vital importance in the Fuller scheme for it is the key to *ephemeralization,* which means "doing more with less." And ephemeralization in turn is the key to worldwide abundance. Improved design, making use of the principles of synergy, can allow us an ever greater return from an ever smaller investment of resources. A communications satellite weighing a quarter of a ton, Fuller loves to remark, is outperforming 75,000 tons of undersea cable. He is convinced that technology around the world is yielding only a 4-per-cent return on the energy it consumes, due to poor design. Better design could increase efficiency three- or four-fold, giving us that much more product for the same energy expense. By attending to the big picture instead of to the details, we could enjoy undreamed-of abundance and at the same time steer Spaceship Earth in harmony with nature's laws. Fuller, for example, has discovered that all the sulphur emitted by all the world's smokestacks as pollution each year exactly equals the amount mined for industrial use. Why not find a way to "mine" the smokestacks, instead of trying to reform their owners?

Fuller is both "intuitively aware" and "scientifically confident"

That a physically permitted design revolution
Is indeed feasible

* * *

Which can do so very much more
With progressively ever less
Of kilowatts, minutes, grams and pollution

* * *

As to be able to raise
The overall percentage of humanity
Enjoying a satisfactorily adequate standard of living
To a one hundred percent 'haveness'
And do so
Without having any human
Prosper at the expense of another . . . (Intuition).

This is the heart of Fuller's oft-repeated message and probably the only part clearly grasped by many of his listeners. Through a proper understanding of the universe and its workings, we can let them eat cake, and have it, too. And the cake will regenerate itself, and nobody will covet anybody else's slice.

III

FULLER is the prophet of abundance, and any attempt to evaluate critically his strengths and weaknesses must begin by acknowledging his tireless and finally rewarding insistence that we open our eyes to the riches our technology has brought us and rid ourselves of the mental habits appropriate to scarcity. As we continue to think that the way to make a building strong is to pile up weight, so we continue to think that men must "earn the right to live" by spending their days at a "job," even if what they do is useless or counterproductive. (Featherbedding union members pretending to be railway brakemen are "earning" their livings, Kenner adds by way of illustration.) Since there is plenty to go around, let us instead give everyone a "research fellowship" and send him off to think or even fish. One in 100,000 will come up with a discovery sufficiently useful to pay for the rest. It worked well once before, Fuller points out, when we called it "the G.I. Bill."

Such proposals raise many obvious questions which Fuller has no interest in thinking through. Still, the sheer fact of abundance is one we have not sufficiently taken account of. Fuller, partnered by Kenner, spurs the imagination to analyze the myriad effects of riches on our society, and frees it to speculate on the rational uses of wealth. His passion and faith are, literally, inspiring, as is also his confession of faith in the sublime reason of Scenario Universe. Space, energy, pattern, process are the concepts that he loves to work with, and when he compounds them, even in his difficult verbiage, they go off with the beautiful suddenness of a sky-rocket, lighting up the whole scene. We don't experience the physical universe in the same way after hearing Buckminster Fuller talk about the speed of light, or what happens when a stone is dropped into the water, or why there is no such thing as a "sunset." Though many of the facts he offers have been theoretically familiar since grade school, he brings them together with his own enthusiasm to make a critical mass, and the landscape is never the same again.

The same is true of many of his social observations, even when they are not new, even when they are oversimplified. While he is frequently and unconsciously the inadequately dressed emperor, he is also at times the clear-eyed child. Much that he has "discovered" (apart, of course, from his inventions) was well known before him,

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but he is authentically that favorite American character, the unconventional boy kicked out of college who has lived to amaze all the Learn'd Astronomers with his wondrous inventions.

THE problems, however, cannot be avoided; many of them, indeed, cluster precisely around Fuller's central doctrine of abundance, his notion of a pie big enough for everyone (itself hardly a new idea, having been expressed repeatedly over the years by Fuller's reviled politicians). The question here, as always, is one of means. We may read through Fuller's entire corpus of a dozen works without finding half a dozen suggestions as to just *how* our efficiency is to be increased, *what* changes are necessary, *who* has an invention or an idea that might help. We could all have our own cheap, lightweight dome to live in and, as a spin-off from space technology (developed, ironically, by specialists), we could perhaps each have "a little black box," a complete life-support system which would also be portable and cheaply rented each year. We could also find a way of mining those smokestacks. (Presumably the nation's laboratories are not empty of people trying to do that and many other things. Fuller tends to write as if nobody but he had noticed human needs.) That is about the sum of his concrete suggestions for bringing about the Design Science Revolution. We turn hopefully to one of his essays called "Ten Proposals for Improving the World" and there we find the following headings: Elimination of Property by Making Ownership Onerous; Elimination of All World Sovereignties; Realization of Design Science Competence. The short paragraph under the last heading explains helpfully that we must find out "how to do so much more with so little in support of total ecology as to render all humanity economically and physiologically successful."

Fuller is sublimely indifferent to such mundane issues as the first (or second or third) step, to detail, to contradiction, to what Mark Twain called the "cussedness of things in general." (He does not seem to have heard of Murphy's Law, concedes Kenner, which holds that if anything can go wrong, it will.) "I was born cross-eyed," he likes to tell his audiences.

> Not until I was four years old was it discovered that this was caused by my being abnormally far-sighted. . . . Until four I could see only large patterns, houses, trees, outlines of people with blurred coloring. While I saw two dark areas on human faces, I did not see a human eye or a teardrop. . . . Despite my new ability to apprehend details, my childhood's spontaneous dependence upon only big pattern clues has persisted (*Utopia or Oblivion*).

Fuller's ruling passion is for first principles. Sage-like, he is so intent upon *truth* as to be willing to overlook mere fact. His books abound in inaccuracies, small and large. Dates, quotations, statistics, historical facts rarely appear the same way twice. According to Kenner, Fuller acknowledges that when he worked as a consultant to *Fortune* in the late 30's, he fell into the habit of relying on the magazine's excellent research department to tidy up his references, and he has apparently not since found anyone else to perform the task. That small errors along the way may accumulate into a large falsity apparently does not concern him—he begins at the other end of the process. A Geodesic Dome, Kenner tells us, requires the most precise machining and joining of parts; the margin for error is much smaller than in conventional structures. Fuller as Thinker, however, begins with the largest formulations he can manage and rarely pursues them down to the point where cracks or crooked edges become apparent.

Utopia or Oblivion, a collection of lectures, contain perhaps the worst offenses in this regard. One is a misstatement of the way that some chemical bonds are formed, with the facts reversed to accommodate Fuller's high regard for the tetrahedron.* The other and potentially more damaging error is a misrepresentation of the published research of Benjamin Bloom, a psychologist who has studied some of the correlations between IQ and environment. In support of his own faith that every child is a potential genius, Fuller has stated not once but several times that Bloom can predict a child's IQ within 1 per cent of accuracy on the basis of a small cluster of environmental factors having mainly to do with housing and such considerations as parental reading and drinking habits. Bloom has made no such claim, Kenner acknowledges—it would be astonishing if any psychologist had, in the currently vexed state of intelligence studies—and the facts as Bloom presents them are a good deal less tidy than they appear in the Fuller redaction. In geometry as well, Kenner says, "The fit between reality and Bucky's abstractions seems to be not quite that near." Fuller makes no deliberate effort to deceive, Kenner is convinced;

* The tetrahedron—pyramid—is Fuller's philosopher's stone. In its twelve angles of 60° each, Fuller finds Nature's own system of measurement, the Universal Coordinates. "A tetrahedron is the most fundamental of all structures" (*Utopia or Oblivion*). It is the smallest stable "omnitriangulated, omnisymmetrical" structure. The carbon atom, present in all organic compounds, offers four potential links to all other atoms, and all organic compounds contain molecules structured tetrahedronally. If we attempt to pack four spheres in such a way as to get the closest fit, with every one touching every other one, we must arrange them not in a square, but in a tetrahedron—three ping-pong balls arranged in a triangle with the fourth perched on top. If we "open" a "closed" system—a tiger is Fuller's example, but presumably any other object, a chair, a bust of Homer, will exhibit the same property—by skinning off its surface and flattening it out, the sum of all the wedges we have to cut in it to make it lie flat and "open" will always be 720°, a tetrahedron.

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"creative misrememberings" is his gentle term for such errors as that covering Bloom's work, and "mythologizing" for the poetic license with which Fuller generally treats his personal history and experience. Mythologizing, certainly, is the only positive term for his amazing version of the race's history, not to mention the history of English and American education. We may legitimately ask when mythologizing becomes not an imaginative condensation of truth, but mere ignorance or misstatement, and a potentially dangerous distaste for social complexity.

We cannot, of course, know what was actually happening at the Auburn University lecture while Fuller was delivering his short course in Western Civilization. (He has repeated it on other occasions.) Perhaps he was winking broadly and the audience was rocking with merry laughter. But the indifference to history of many young people is in any case notorious, and we have not lacked for equally, if more tendentiously, mythologized accounts of human affairs that have been taken with the utmost seriousness. Fuller himself is aware of this persistent social fact.

> That there is an insatiable popular demand for an overall historical perspective is well-documented by the enormous and continuing sale of Bibles, World Almanacs, encyclopedias, and works such as H. G. Wells's *Outline of History* (*Earth, Inc.*).

This sort of historical perspective with a few clear lines running into the future is what we always ask of our sages. We can also imagine that not a few of Fuller's younger listeners, perhaps chafing at required courses and the exigencies of the grading system, are happy to hear that what the future requires of them is to eschew specialization and concentrate on asking the "big questions." He assured the Auburn students that they could quickly and easily get "tutored" in any special knowledge—microbiology?—they should happen to require.

Sages commonly offer a special language unique to the initiated—spells, mantras, pious and powerful formulas—and Fuller has a fine supply of words and symbols to conjure with. His favorite symbol, the tetrahedron, makes a good starting point for an unfortunately limited examination of the way in which he typically manipulates language and concepts.

Thus, a favorite Fuller technique, apparently of reasoning as well as of lecturing, is what might be called philosophical "bait and switch." Having established an example or a definition in one realm, he leaps with it into another and speeds to a triumphant conclusion before anyone realizes the plane of discourse has been changed. The sale is concluded and Fuller is on to the next item while the dizzied customer is trying to figure out what he's bought. So it is with the tetrahedron which, according to a Fuller Law, expresses all the relationships among experiences:

> The number of telephone lines necessary to interequip various numbers of individuals so that any two individuals will always have their unique private telephone line is always $(n^2\text{-}n)/2$, where N is the number of telephones.

Now comes the quick leap and turn, while the reader/listener is still wrapped in telephone wires.

> This is to say that all the special interrelationships of all experiences—comprehension of which would be the key to what we call complete understanding of "what everything is all about"—is always $(n^2\text{-}n)/2$ ("Planetary Planning").

When these relationships are pictured geometrically, the tetrahedron quickly appears, and so "understanding is symmetrically tetrahedronal"—if we assume that the relationship between two experiences is a single, direct, back-and-forth connection like a telephone line.

Similarly, Fuller likes to remark that science has discovered most extinct species to have died out because they became overspecialized and could no longer adapt to change. The same thing could happen to us, he warns, and seemingly never notices that he is equating two different meanings of "specialization." A case could surely be made that the proliferation of arcane specialties in our time represents precisely a socially cooperative effort—relying on one another's expertise—to adapt to change and to an increasingly complex environment. It also seems to have eluded Fuller's notice that many of the life-enhancing scientific discoveries that he hails, such as the cracking of the genetic code, were accomplished by specialists.

The conclusion is inescapable that, for a poet and philosopher, Fuller is curiously blind to the implications of many of his own words and ideas. He often seems to use them more as talismans than as tools for thought. *Ephemeralization,* for example—doing more with less—is a useful concept, although under the name of "efficiency" it has certainly been heard of before. However, merely invoking the concept does not solve the problems, including stubborn ecological ones, which Fuller seems to assume it will obviate. One of his domes, Kenner says, could enclose the whole cathedral at Seville and yet weigh only as much as three of the cathedral's stone columns (besides being constructed in a minute fraction of the time). The dome would seem to be a perfect example of ephemeralization—until we recall that the resources and industrial apparatus needed for its computerized calculations, precision-cut metal struts, and plastic sealants make medieval stone-quarrying look like digging in a sand-pile. One farmer can produce as much food as ten a century ago—but the

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other nine are now employed in tractor factories and chemical fertilizer plants. An analysis of resource use would probably indicate that many modern economic and technological marvels result from doing more with more.

Indeed, a particular irony of Fuller's renown as a contemporary social philosopher is that a culture becoming increasingly wary of machinery and the growth ethic should have taken to its heart the very Apostle of Technology. At a time when ecologists worry about the ill effects of rapid industrialization in underdeveloped countries and affluent Americans piously recycle aluminum foil, Fuller's solution to the problems of the world is not less growth, but more. The Design Requirements (*No More Secondhand God*) of the scientific dwelling on which he has brooded for decades seem to envision the use of "energy slaves" rather than human labor for every task of daily living. Everyone, of course, has his own notion of good technology and bad technology, depending on his personal predilection, and Fuller's may be inferred from a careful study of his writings: bad technology is whatever contributes to waste and high living. The distinction between responsible and irresponsible growth is, however, rarely spelled out.

And always there remains the problem that most people stubbornly continue to prefer worshipping in a stone cathedral to worshipping in a Geodesic Dome. Among the small-change of actuality that Fuller usually overlooks are all the kinds of issues summed up as "the human element." It is hardly necessary to bother with "reforming" human nature if one simply refuses to take account of all the irrationalities and romanticisms that have been summed up under that rubric. The jaw-breaking neologisms and cranky constructions that often make his writing so formidable—not a "home," not even a "house," but a "dwelling advantage"—seem partly to arise from an effort to avoid language that carries connotation (they may also serve to obscure the heavy dependency of his vision on the abundant use of electric or nuclear power). That people are subject to preferences, desires, traditions—as well as to conflicts and contrarieties—seems of little moment to him. When ideology impinges on his attention, he views it not as an inevitable product of the questing mind, but as an unnatural accretion caused by specialization. His main acknowledgment of such irrational problems as an intolerable crime rate in the richest nation in the world is a crude and simple environmentalism, with particular emphasis on housing. He has proposed enthusiastically that 1,000 people could live cheaply and comfortably in a giant dome ("Beehives," was the prompt reaction of one woman who saw his models), without ever questioning whether they would get along together any better there than in a high-rise project.

Fuller, with his proposals for eliminating property and national states, is of course very much out to reform human nature in spite of his disclaimers. He has defined our major task as, "how to get all of humanity to educate itself swiftly enough to generate spontaneous social behaviors that will avoid extinction" ("Planetary Planning"). The veriest reformer could hardly say more. Fuller does not desire to make men good, it is true, but he is very intent upon making them *reasonable.*

Until humanity starts behaving
In logical ways
For logical reasons
Natural evolution will force it
To keep on behaving logically
For seemingly illogical reasons—
Resulting inexorably, as at present,
In humanity's backing
Rump-bumpingly into its future . . .
(Earth, Inc.)

Surely the reformer most to be held in awe—or fear—is he who knows that natural evolution is on his side.

Fuller is most comfortable when thinking of human beings as machines, ecological functions, "types," or expressions of Universal Mind. Man is a "transceiver" for God. He is also a "self-balancing, 28-jointed, adapter-base biped; an electrochemical reduction plant," piloted by a "Phantom Captain," who is weightless, who is not tuneable by the senses, whose departure we call death (*Nine Chains to the Moon*). Man is also a "pattern-integrity." Before countless audiences, Fuller has held up a rope with a knot in it. The knot is not the manila of the rope; the same knot could exist in nylon. It is not substance at all, but pattern. A cow is a "knot" which takes energy from the sun via grass and passes it on as milk or meat. A man is a knot whose function is applying Mind to bring order into the inherently disorderly, energetic, physical universe. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" asked the psalmist, and Buckminster Fuller replies, "The anti-entropic principle in universe."

FULLER professes a mind-and-matter dualism which would have delighted a medieval monk or an American Puritan. A haunting familiarity runs through many of the ideas of the "Citizen of the 21st Century" who wants to jolt us out of our accustomed ways of thinking. The infatuation with technology and the conceit of the human being as a wondrous machine have a 19th-century freshness. The implicit faith in progress and human perfectibility also animated 19th-century minds, and Fuller's Benevolent Intelligence seems compounded out of the Great Watchmaker of the Deists and Emerson's Over-Soul. Property is obsolete and only weighs us down, insists Fuller; "Simplify, simplify," said Thoreau. Every child is born a genius and only gets de-geniused because its con-

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ventional parents tell it untruths about the universe; "Shades of the prison house begin to close/ Upon the growing boy," wrote Wordsworth. Fuller discovered the "Phantom Captain" as Gilbert Ryle was putting to rest "the ghost in the machine." He can inform us that gold is not wealth and urge a new system of accounting our economic capacities as though Keynes had never lived. Even the fruitful concept of synergy, which Fuller is distressed to find known to only 3 per cent of his educated listeners, has a respectable history as the rule that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." A heavy cost of Fuller's truncated education has been that he has had to rediscover the whole cultural world himself. Academic humanists cringing before the big stick of Relevance may take heart: the popularity of Buckminster Fuller suggests in its way a great demand for traditional thought.

It also indicates a demand for reassurance and optimism inevitable when the times are out of joint. Social dislocation always produces new prophets who confirm that the land of milk and honey lies just ahead. A clear, scale map with the obstacles and pitfalls well marked is rarely provided, but we are getting a commodity even more welcome—the assurance that all we have to do is abandon outworn rules and conventions and rely on our natural intuition. As Reed Whittemore remarked in a review of Fuller and Marshall McLuhan: "Our social machine is stuck; the regular mechanics are perplexed; so we call in the wizards of Oz."*

Fuller is clearly a benevolent man, and he appeals to benevolence. He also appeals to impluses socially dangerous in our time: to a craving for political simplicity, to a demand for technological wealth without its burdens, to a monolithic and essentially manipulative view of human nature, to a desire for social and historical myth that can explain once and for all "what everything is all about." Society needs sages and also needs to pay close attention to them. They throw down the glove for the next generation, and perhaps Fuller's greatest performance as a much-touted (and often inaccurate) social prophet was in coming so early and intuitively on the very kind of gloves our age would most like to seize upon. His followers in their homemade domes, living on organic vegetables and myth and pondering the big questions, will pay the price for his romanticism. No doubt many of them will think it a good bargain. No doubt too, if they find the price high, they will generously share it with the rest of us.

* *New Republic*, June 10, 1972.

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Gentlemen and Scholars

Milton Himmelfarb

In the name of equality, some would admit students to college and professional school by lottery. Though egalitarians of this kind are not numerous, neither are they merely eccentric. Their application of egalitarian doctrine to education may not be the only one possible, but it is a logical and consistent one. If it is unlikely to be put into effect, that is because not many even of them would like to drive across a bridge designed by an engineer who owed his credentials to a lottery.

For the action of privilege and unfair discrimination, egalitarianism of this sort is the opposite reaction: lotteries are indiscriminate. Of course, privilege and discrimination are not quite what they used to be, but we have learned that resentment and indignation tend to wax as their objects begin to wane. And on the whole, in the occidental tradition a scholar has been a gentleman—which is to say that real education has not been for the populace.

Both in origin and in self-understanding, the occidental tradition is largely the Greek tradition. The Loeb Classical Library's editor and translator of the Politics tells us that for Aristotle *"kalokágathos,* 'fine gentleman,' connotes social as well as moral distinction," while *bánausos,* "artisan" or "tradesman," connotes "cramped in body" and "vulgar in taste." In the lexicons *banausía* is defined as "handicraft, the life and habits of a mechanic; hence vulgarity, bad taste." Why trouble to educate the banausic?

I am going to contrast the Jewish tradition about education to the Greek, and I am going to suggest that the Jewish tradition is a democratic mean between Greek aristocracy—and it was Aristotle who taught that aristocracy can easily degenerate into oligarchy—and the contemporary egalitarian-populist reaction against it.

There are two dangers attendant upon an argument of the sort I wish to make. The first is rhetorical or forensic, the temptation to speak only about the good on your side and the bad on the other. The second is substantive: Can it be right to speak of *the* Greek and *the* Jewish tradition?

From defenders of the faith you can hear, usually around Hanukkah time, hurrahs for the Jews and boos for the Greeks. That is not my inclination. The Greek legacy is a great and precious possession of the human race. As for Aristotle, whom I take to be in some sense representative of the Greek tradition, have we any record of genius stronger or more copious than his? He can be cold and harsh—but that, I believe, is because he did not have the benefit of a Revelation. If he had had a Revelation, he could scarcely have been Aristotle.

The pro-Jewish hurrahing and anti-Greek booing are pretty well confined to Jewish defenders of the faith, and among them to the more simple-minded. In the general culture, and especially its higher reaches, the normal bias is pro-Greek and anti-Jewish. There, even Jews—or rather men and women of Jewish parentage—are apt to have that bias. Simone Weil may be a bad example, because of theological complications. Julien Benda is a better one.

I shall try to avoid hurrahs and boos.

Can it be proper to speak of the Jewish tradition and the Greek tradition? May we think of them as entities? It is well to raise such questions—provided they are not answers in disguise.

Jewish history is so old, so dispersed, so varied, so diversely influenced that any suggestion of a univocal Jewish tradition must surely be wrong. But it is easy to pass from this understanding to a kind of runaway nominalism. There is a man who teaches that Judaism is what Jews do, and consequently that there are as many different kinds of Judaism, equally valid, as there are Jews. He would say, I suppose, that if certain witches and wizards are Jews, then their faith and practice are Jewish. The Jewish tradition is complex and its boundaries are fuzzy; but it is not so invertebrate as to disallow our saying that Jewish witches and wizards are un-Jewish.

Similarly with the Greek tradition, even more complex. Oxbridge dons were not paid enough to support them and their dependents; nor were British army officers; nor were (or are?) Members of Parliament. They were gentlemen, and gentlemen had private incomes. The causes of English society's taste for private incomes are to be found in English history—for instance, the fright that Cromwell's army inspired in succeeding generations of the upper class. But part of English history is the influence of Aristotle and the rest of

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Greek culture on the scholars and gentlemen of England, and through them on English life.

For the Greek tradition a key word, embodying a key concept, is *skholé,* "leisure." From *skholé,* in the Latin form *schola,* every Western language has received its word for "school" (and Yiddish its *shul*). No leisure, no schooling. Leisure is the opposite of business, or busy-ness. "Business, industry, occupation" is simply "absence of leisure," *askholía. Skholastikós* means "leisured"; also "learned"; also "pedantic."

> • . . . the master's skill is that of using slaves. . . . But this skill has nothing great or grand about it. . . . Therefore, for those who can afford not to be bothered, an agent assumes this responsibility, while they themselves are politicking or philosophizing [Politics 1255b].
>
> • . . . most people think . . . it impossible . . . for a poor man to govern well, since he has no leisure [lit., to govern well and have leisure, *skholázein*: 1273a].
>
> • . . . the best state will not make an artisan a citizen [1278a].
>
> • . . . as the adage has it, there is no leisure for slaves . . . [1334a].

Only gentlemen—and (for Aristotle) their superiors, the philosophers—have leisure. Artisans, and generally all those who have to earn a living, lack leisure. Legally freemen and citizens, they are in some measure like slaves, because whoever must be distracted from high and noble things by having to earn a living is not truly a free man. The education befitting one truly free is not for the artisan and the slave.

As representative of the Jewish tradition I take Avot (or Pirqe Avot), the "(Chapters of the) Fathers." It is the most accessible part of rabbinical literature, because easiest in content and language. It is also that part of rabbinical literature which is most liturgical, since it is read in the synagogue. Consequently it is the most widely known. Among Sephardim, it seems to have been used to teach rabbis the conduct and outlook appropriate to their station. Among Ashkenazim, it was used to teach the folk respect for rabbis and rabbinical law.

Avot is the Rabbis' systematic assertion of their claim to uninterrupted, legitimate succession to Moses, whose authority was directly from God. The Ten Commandments begin with an authorizing, legitimating clause: "I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Then, having been told Who commands, and by what right, we are given His commandments. Just so, a royal edict will begin: "We, Henry (James, Charles, William, George) . . . by the grace of God, King. . . ." (Kings, viceroys, and popes use the majestic plural. God contents Himself with the singular.)

Avot begins with the Rabbis telling us how they received the right to teach and judge:

> Moses received Torah [sc., both written and oral] from Sinai, and gave it over [*masar; masorah/masoret*="tradition"; English "giving over"= Latin *traditio*] to Joshua; Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets. The Prophets gave it over to the men of the Great Assembly. . . . Simeon the Righteous was one of the last of the Great Assembly. . . . Antigonos of Sokho received from Simeon the Righteous. . . . Yose son of Joezer . . . and Yose son of Johanan. . . . Joshua son of Perahiah and Mittai the Arbelite. . . . Judah son of Tabbai and Simeon son of Shetah. . . . Shemaiah and Avtalion . . . Hillel and Shammai. . . .

Avot, then, is the Jewish tradition's explicit account of itself. It is also a polemic against the Aristotelian-Greek tradition.

If for Aristotle and the Greeks the necessary good is *skholé,* "leisure," for Avot the necessary good is *mela'khah,* "work, occupation." (From this has been derived Calvinist work as vocation or calling.) "Shemaiah says: Love *mela'khah* and hate *rabbanut* [office, as in Shakespeare's 'insolence of office']. . . ." The commentators adduce the parallel in Nedarim 49b: "Great is *mela'khah,* which honors those engaged in it; and hate lordship." (Later, *rabbanut* came to mean "rabbinate." Though most Jews nowadays are not especially zealous in obedience to rabbinical injunctions, they make an exception for the injunction of shunning *rabbanut.*) The commentators also recall the Rabbis' insistence that a father must teach his son a trade; cite the Ten Commandments, where we are told to rest on the Sabbath and work on the other days of the week; and refer to the example of God Himself, Who did His *mela'khah* of creation in six days and rested (had leisure?) on the seventh. (Aristotle says that happiness is an activity, but that the activity of God, who is happy and blessed by his nature, is *skholé.*)

Aristotle hints broadly (1324a) that the contemplative life is better, more philosophical, than communal-political and active life. Earlier on he was emphatic that man is a communal-political being and that anyone so self-sufficient that he does not need the polis is not a man but must be either a beast or a god (1253a). We may infer that Aristotle wants us to regard the philosopher, who alone is capable of the withdrawn and contemplative life, as godlike.

In Avot the word for "scholar" is *hakham,* "wise man, sage." Among Jews the scholar occupied more or less the place occupied among Greeks by the philosopher. (Professor Henry Fischel of Indiana has written some remarkable things on Hillel as a Hellenistic *sóphos,* "sage," and on related matters.) Aristotle implies that philosophers may and perhaps should withdraw from society. Hillel tells the scholarly and the simple alike not to withdraw from the community.

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For Aristotle the contemplative life is superior to the active life; but Simeon the son of Rabban Gamaliel (and grandson of Hillel) says: "Not *midrash*"—inquiry, study, the Jewish counterpart of *theoría*—"is primary, but *ma'aseh*"—action, deed, corresponding to *prâxis*. Later in Avot, *hokhmah*—wisdom, learning, theory—is likened to a tree's leaves, and deeds to a tree's roots: it is not leaves that will keep a tree from being overturned in a storm. A scholar's normal temptation is to elevate theory over practice. The Jewish scholars resisted it.

Above all, the Rabbis repudiated the Greek aristocratic-philosophical conviction that work, livelihood, is only a necessary evil, fortunately limited to the artisan and the slave. A later Rabban Gamaliel, the son of R. Judah the Prince, says: "It is best to combine study of Torah with a wordly occupation [*derekh eretz*] because exertion in the two together represses"—causes to be forgotten—"sin; whereas all [study of] Torah in the absence of work [*mela'khah*] . . . will cause sin."

The standard interpretation of this dictum is that if a scholar does not learn a trade he will go hungry, and may therefore become a thief or robber. No doubt that is what Rabban Gamaliel son of R. Judah the Prince meant, but I think he also meant, in conscious opposition to Greco-Roman ideas, that work was desirable even for the prosperous, because—as the Calvinists were to be fond of saying—the Devil finds work for idle hands. I suspect that the aristocratic outlook was so foreign to the later commentators, and the need and virtue of earning a living by work so self-evident, that they did not realize Rabban Gamaliel was deliberately contradicting a self-evident truth of his civilization—that work was low and vulgar, and at best necessitous. It is for this reason, I think, that the Gaon of Vilna could refer Rabban Gamaliel's learning-with-occupation to something quite different, in a book of Scripture the Gaon did not know was Hellenistic: "Wisdom [*hokhmah*] is good with an inheritance . . ." (Ecclesiastes 7:11). An occupation is *askholía*, an inherited estate permits *skholé*. (Pindar says, in his second Pythian ode: "Best is to be rich, together with the good fortune of wisdom alotted."*)

But it is Hillel who most sharply and polemically teaches a philosophy of education contrary to the Aristotelian-Greek one. Hillel adds to his prohibition of withdrawal from the community another, which is usually translated more or less as follows: "Do not say, 'When I have leisure [*likheshe'eppaneh*] I will study.' What if you have no leisure?" In this translation Hillel is thinking about individuals. I suggest that he may also be thinking about classes: "You artisan or craftsman, do not say to yourself, 'If I ever become a member of the leisure class, I will then seek the appropriate liberal Jewish education.' Study now. *Skholé* is for the few. Will you allow yourself to be condemned to ignorance and vulgarity, like Aristotle's artisan, seeing that your lot will probably always be *askholía*?"

R. Yose the priest, one of the five famous disciples of Rabban Johanan son of Zakkai, says: ". . . train yourself to learn Torah, because it is not yours as a patrimony"—unlike an estate, which you inherit and which makes leisure possible. Merit and effort count, not birth.

One reads this, and one's eyes glaze with boredom. Could anything be more conventional and dull? In fact, it states a revolutionary ideology. It is the program and the self-justification of a newly dominant class, the scholars, who have ousted a previously dominant class, the priests. R. Yose is himself both priest and scholar. His priesthood he has received by inheritance—a *kohen* is the son of a *kohen*, back to the beginning—but his scholarship he has acquired by exertion. The scholar-priest says that scholarship by exertion is and should be more important than priesthood by inheritance. That the ideologists and beneficiaries of this revolution denied that it was a revolution, even to themselves, should not surprise us. Until modern times, revolutions were defended as reformations, or restorations. So, on R. Yose the priest's "Torah . . . is not yours as a patrimony," a very old commentary soothingly concludes that this must be God's will, since He chose as Moses' successor not (by the principle of birth and inheritance) Moses' son but (by the principle of individual merit) Joshua; and only two centuries ago the Gaon of Vilna recalled the same precedent. The Rabbis knew Scripture. They knew Deuteronomy 33:10, for example: "They [the Levitical priests] shall teach Jacob Thine ordinances, and Israel Thy law [instruction=*torah*]. . . ." Nor was this teaching prerogative of the priests something that had long since fallen into desuetude. Malachi, the last of the Prophets, was even more fervent about priestly authority (2:7): "For the priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek *torah* from his mouth; for he is the messenger [angel?—*mal'akh*] of the LORD of hosts."

For the Rabbis, Scripture was the will of God. Yet they stripped the priest of the judicial and teaching functions Scripture had given him, taking those functions for themselves and leaving him only with cultic ones. They did as the French Revolution was to do, narrowing the importance of birth and broadening the importance of effort and achievement. The Jews' religion and society, once so priestly, were thenceforth to be lay. The Rabbis would have accomplished that revolution even if the Temple—source of the priests' power and honor—had been left standing.

The last, sixth chapter, not part of Avot proper originally but of a piece with the rest, agrees with R. Yose. It tells us how to reach the goal: "Such is

* I am indebted to Martha Himmelfarb for this reference.

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the way [toward the learning] of Torah: eat bread with salt, drink water sparingly, sleep on the ground, live a life of privation; and labor at the Torah." Heed neither the supercilious aristocrats and oligarchs, with their birth and their effortless superiority, who would bar the way to the unprivileged; nor those so consumed by hatred of privilege that they would deny even the distinction of effort.

I HAVE spoken of theory and practice, and of the Jewish tradition's elevation of practice over theory. But the Jewish tradition, and notably Avot, is itself a kind of theory. Has the Jewish tradition-theory also been the Jewish practice? Not entirely, maybe not mostly. In most of Jewish society, most of the time, the scholar was not an artisan. Mostly the scholar earned his living more easily than the artisan, and decisively outranked him. Tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, smith enjoyed no great esteem. Shemaiah's "love work" was an excellent principle, to pay lip service to. On the fatal identification of Jews with moneylending in the Middle Ages and almost to our time, Cecil Roth wrote that some Jews were willing victims, not resisting Christendom's assigning them to that pariah specialization. A moneylender had more time for study than an artisan. Asked what he liked about his job, a baseball umpire once said, "You can't beat the hours." Isaac of York could have said that.

So Jewish tradition-theory has not been identical with practice. But it has affected practice. It has kept practice from being worse. And it keeps insisting that work and merit are superior to birth and privilege, and to the equality of the lottery.

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The New Philistinism

Dan Jacobson

Poets, Shelley wrote, are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. The quotation is embarrassingly well known. Few of those who invoke it, however, seem much embarrassed by the fact that Shelley's proclamation was made just at the time when an unprecedented gap was beginning to open up between poets and other imaginative writers *as a class* and the rulers of the societies they lived in. Milton, Marvell, Dryden, Wyatt, Chaucer, even Shakespeare (to confine oneself to some obvious instances among English poets alone) had intimate connections with one circle or another among the political leaders of their time, and in different ways identified themselves profoundly with the aspirations they nourished for their country. But from the time of the Romantics onward, to put oneself forward as a poet was usually to assert one's intense hostility to the dominant ethos of society, if not to society as a whole. In "A Defence of Poetry" Shelley announces that the "mechanists and reasoners," as he calls the rulers of his own era, had shown themselves to be incapable of instructing mankind in its feelings, of developing its sympathies and sensibilities, of creating a world which was spiritually inhabitable. So someone else had to take up the task.

And now? One wonders what he would make of our circumstances today, when the contemporary equivalents of his mechanists and reasoners, the wielders of power within our society, such representatives of institutional life as academics, politicians, and top bureaucrats, appear to be only too ready to pay their respects to his analysis of where the balance of moral and psychic power ultimately lies. In most countries of the West creative writers (as a class, again) have never been so much honored by officialdom as they are today, or so generously subsidized by universities, governments, and major foundations; their opinions have never before been so pressingly invited on all subjects. On what ground? Why, because they are the unacknowledged legislators of the world! When Shelley made his remark, or issued his challenge, the situation was already full of paradox. A hundred and fifty years later it has become quite labyrinthine; farcical and painful in equal measure at every turn.

Our sources of authority have dried up, and those who rule over us are perhaps more uneasily aware of it than anyone else. They look around for help. Consider, for example, the decline of religious belief. Ultimate sanctions, enduring values, a sense of participation in communal rites and observances, a prospect of immortality: all gone. Or consider how important "taste" must be as an indicator of class and identity and personal worth at a time when these have never been more in doubt for the individual adrift in an amorphous society. Or consider how much blood has been spilled over the concepts of race and nation during the last couple of hundred years: who is there who can truly reveal to us the lineaments of the mystical body which the nation is, or should become?

Modestly, our writers and critics shuffle forward. They know all about values and sanctions; these have always been their special concern. They have always had eminent domain over questions of taste. As guardians of language, they naturally know better than any other group what the destiny of the tribe or nation should ultimately be. Any other problems? If so, you may confidently leave them with those who for so long now have been spoken of as the conscience of the race; the diviners of the spirit of the age; the begetters of the feelings which will carry us through our present crises of conscience; the maintainers of our continuity with the past; our antennae to the future; the diagnosticians of the deep ailments of our psyche; the transformers of morals and ethics.

All from verses? From stories? From plays? From the writer's private fantasies, from his particular sense of verbal rhythm and order, from the voices he hears in his head conducting sometimes nonsensical dialogues with one another? From the games he likes to play with his memories? From his fixation on the sounds of certain words? It sounds implausible. It is implausible. Somehow, it seems, too few strides have covered too much territory. But the writer's ambitions continue to egg him forward. So do the cries of his fellow writers. So do the professors, turning upon him from a thousand universities their eager, interpretive gaze, lit up by the urgent plea: *Give us something to talk about.* The media are ready. The public itself, in its deep desperation and its frivolous desire for novelty (and its inability to distinguish the one from the other), is waiting to be told how to live, what to feel, what to think. The writer silences his own misgivings. Yes, that's what his stories and poems are all about, actually. They are not, as he might once have thought, singular verbal patterns, orderings of his intimate experience, rhythms which he hopes may become those of his reader for as long as he holds the book or poem in his hand, a series of intellectual and emotional surprises which immediately take on the appearance of so many unsuspected anticipations gratified. How limited, how paltry, a preoccupation with such effects must seem when the world cries out for his

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unsparing chastisements. And for his healing touch.*

Every age has its own particular form of philistinism, which it finds almost impossible to recognize. How difficult it is in our own case to believe that an impulse which apparently does literature so much honor, which treats literary works as the nearest things we have to oracles and scriptures, can itself be philistine; indifferent to art, even hostile to it. It is especially difficult for writers to accept that this may be the case when they are the beneficiaries, materially and psychically, of that impulse. They are only human, after all. Like everybody else, they want to have their cake and also eat it.

But when he sits at his desk, on his own, confronted once again with the task of putting one word down after another on pieces of paper, the writer's misgivings sometimes return. It occurs to him that perhaps in accepting so willingly the honorific duties and titles laid upon his shoulders he has implicitly acquiesced in a derogation of the dignity of what he is actually doing; he has sold the pass; he has agreed that his work matters not in itself, not because it has sought and found its own self-delighting forms, obeyed its own rules, expressed what is intrinsic to it alone, but because of the constructions that can be put upon it and the conclusions that can be drawn from it.

At this point he may call to his aid the thought of writers in totalitarian countries who have suffered so greatly for trying to do as much or as little as himself. There, surely, is the evidence of how important and how central is his activity as critic and moral mentor of society. But the tragedy and glory of the martyrdom of those writers sit uncomfortably upon him. For him to pretend that he and they are in the same boat is an indulgence. Firstly, he is being untrue to himself and to his own position, from which all work of merit springs. Even more discomfiting is the thought that it is precisely the totalitarians, who, in their ineffably crude and vulgar fashion, are indifferent to the values that art may have as art, who deny that there are any such values, and who wish to treat it as nothing more than documented propaganda, a vehicle for instruction; while the martyred writers, for their part, beg to be given just a little space in which to breathe as artists.

Finally, it is possible that our poet or novelist may reflect on the disturbing paradox that it is just at this moment in history, when literature has been so universally given a place of honor in society, when it is so diligently studied in official places and lavishly funded from official sources, that something bad appears to have happened to it. Simply, we have so few major writers. In the English language we have probably fewer than at any time for several hundred years past; and much the same seems to be true of other languages. Now obviously no one could speak of a cause-and-effect relationship here. The factors involved in the slackening of creativity in one or another branch of human effort, in the divergence of a civilization's energies from one field to another, are of a complexity which defies the understanding of those who are actually involved in the process, and which can only be doubtfully unraveled and explained by the historian looking back. But at the very least one is entitled to say that our pieties about literature and the social role of the writer do not, on the face of it, seem to be helping him to perform his task adequately.

In view of all the above, it may seem almost comically limp to suggest that in place of the new philistinism, we might try to return to an older aestheticism. That instead of art for politics' sake, or for religion's sake, or for therapy's sake, or even art for the sake of professorial tenure, we should try to respond to art for art's own sake. That we should remember that the primary purpose of art is and always has been to give pleasure ("Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure," wrote Shelley in his "Defence"); and that if it does not do so we simply have no excuse for devoting ourselves to it, either as writers or readers.

The slogan "art for art's sake," the very concept of "aestheticism," have a pretty bad reputation, I know. Most people will think of them as an invitation merely to allow themselves to float belly upward on a welter of undiscriminating sensations and styles, washed unresistingly to and fro by the ever changing tides of fashion. Or perhaps they will recall an older tradition of cosseted, self-regarding art and letters; of incense, gemlike flames, ritualistic hushes, and *mains blanches et calmes*. Are these the pleasures and satisfactions I am recommending to readers?

Well, there is another way of approaching the matter. There is another tradition of aestheticism which is in polar opposition to the lethargy of those just described. It sees our aesthetic pleasures as springing primarily from conflict. From contradiction. From struggle. From a battle freely entered into by the artist with no guarantee that he will emerge victoriously from it. In life, most of the conflicts we have to go through are forced upon us; we would prefer to have things all our own way, if only we could so arrange them; we suffer every time we are worsted. In art—in art of any consequence—a strange reversal takes place. There the conflict is exultantly embraced; the artist voluntarily pits against his own deepest longings and desires whatever he has experienced of the weight and momentum of the world, its indifference and cruelty. For fun! For the pleasure of it! Because it is a game in which he can exercise his mental and moral powers! The sole reward he seeks within the work itself is the transformation, by the miracle of art, of all the contradictions which threaten to destroy him into those mutually sustaining forces which hold his work together. They secure its balance and autonomy; they fill out and articulate its form.

* The other day I saw a review in *Time* magazine of a novel about the plight of women in modern society. To indicate the depth of the novelist's seriousness, the reviewer spoke approvingly of her indifference to what he called "the cosmetics of the novel." These turned out to be . . . style and character. How is one to explain to such a reader that style and character, together with plot, tone, rhythm, etc., are not the "cosmetics" of the novel; they *are* the novel? Without them we can have exhortations about the plight of women and the future of mankind; we cannot have novels.

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This has obviously nothing to do with conventional notions of "pleasant" or "unpleasant" subject matter; or with an ostensible determination on the part of the writer to affirm values or to deny them; or with the adoption by him of optimistic or pessimistic attitudes to life in general. Surrender is always possible, in any direction. There is never a shortage of excuses for it. Witness the eerie similarity between certain passages of the debauched Jean Genet and the maidenly effusions of Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

As for the reader, he too can participate vicariously yet wholeheartedly in the conflict; or he can hold back from it. To try to treat a novel or poem as a tricked-up compendium of instructions, a storehouse of portable wisdom, a safe-deposit box in which gilt-edge moral securities are steadily maturing; to think of the novelist or poet as surrogate priest or psychiatrist, prophet, or ideologist; to look to him to invent and promote new "lifestyles" for instant imitation; to believe that his work has a "depth" which is in some way separable from its surface encounters of word with word, image with image, impression with impression, and so through every other chosen detail that goes to make up the whole imaginative structure—all this, and any of it, is to hold back, to take no risks, to keep safely to one's known self. It is effectively to deny poetry and fiction the chance of lifting from us the burdens of consequence, of opinion, of being the proud possessors of sober or daring views, of knowing what we feel about this, that, and every other important issue.

What freedom one feels in being rid, even temporarily, of all that! And how frightening it can be! *I hold opinions,* the naked, modern soul insists, *therefore I am.* . . . By contrast, the imaginative writer who is truly engrossed in his task has none. He permits himself the ultimate gaiety and irresponsibility of pleading the world's cause, not his own. It is no way for a serious legislator to behave.

Thinking About the City

Walter Berns

Cities express an ambivalence in the American soul: we like cities and wish to live in them—or at least to visit them—but we also dislike cities and wish to avoid them, and live instead on farms or in suburbs, and wish we could redesign the whole country along the lines of the Berkshires, in western Massachusets—with the Turnpike for rapid transit but to a different kind of Boston. Cities are the home of commerce—business and industry we now say—and therefore of the inequality that naturally arises out of commerce—some men become richer than others—whereas this country was founded on the proposition that all men are created equal, and it seems to follow, for some of us at least, that equal we should remain. Originally, then, we opposed the city in the name of democracy. Yet we know, when we think about it, that there is no necessary connection between equality or democracy, on the one hand, and agrarianism; that there was once a purely agrarian society in the West, but it was not democratic; indeed, it was known as feudalism. When we think about it, we would be hard pressed to name a purely agrarian society that was at the same time democratic—outside Rousseau's books that is, and Jefferson's imagination. The latter, as a wise man has reminded us, "did not seem to realize the extent to which, in constantly seeking to strengthen agriculture, not *with* other elements making for a balanced economy but *at the expense of* other elements, he was acting to strengthen slavery." At any rate, our ambivalence toward the city has one of its roots in Jeffersonian democracy, which retains its vitality among us even though the sturdy yeoman farmer has long since been replaced by the suburban homeowner fighting crab grass with a bad back.

The great cities, the ones we visit on holiday or are whisked to in ever-increasing numbers by the charter flights, were once the homes of kings and emperors, who built the palaces that are now the museums and the grounds that are now the public parks, and who won the battles memorialized in the squares and fountains and obelisks and columns constructed out of captured cannon melted down for the purpose. We love Paris, it is not a bit like Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul; the trouble is, we cannot imagine Paris without Louis XIV and Napoleon, neither of whom we could abide for a moment if he were to offer himself on or off a party ticket; or Rome without the emperors and popes, or Vienna without the Hapsburgs, or London without Elizabeth and the Georges and the others. Again, much of what attracts us to the city has an undemocratic element in it. At the very minimum it reminds us of what Tocqueville told us: justice, or at least democratic justice, and that cultivation of the human spirit that produces beautiful things are not compatible.

> Do you wish to give a certain elevation to the human mind and teach it to regard the things of this world with generous feelings, to inspire men with a scorn of mere temporal advantages, to form and nourish strong convictions and keep alive the spirit of honorable devotedness? Is it your object to refine the habits, embellish the manners, and cultivate the arts, to promote the love of poetry, beauty, and glory? Would you constitute a people fitted to act powerfully upon all other nations, and prepared for those high enterprises which, whatever be their results, will leave a name forever famous in history? If you believe such to be the object of society, avoid the government of the democracy, for it would not lead you with certainty to the goal.

This is a harsh judgment, palliated only slightly by the virtues of de-

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mocracy, which he delineates in his following paragraph.

We admire Venice for its color and variety; it is an exotic place, with vestiges of an earlier meeting of the East and West. We admire Amsterdam, rather similar to Venice in its canals and especially in its sights, scents, and flavors brought from the exotic East by generations of Dutchmen. And the London of the first Elizabeth, and of the East India Company and the East India Docks; of ship chandlers, spice shops, coffee importers and coffee houses, and Ceylonese tea merchants; the London through whose port came the world and through whose same port one went out to the world, literally and imaginatively. We admire, in short, the cosmopolitan city—the *cosmos polis,* the world city; but we suspect, having been taught by Jefferson, that it is precisely the *cosmo*politan character of the city that makes government difficult and community impossible; and some of us—Lewis Mumford, for example—have such a yearning for community that we come to hate the city, and dream of new places in the countryside—call them Garden Cities if you must—surrounded by green belts and featuring the Community Center, the contemporary substitute for self-government. Of course there is a connection between free government and community (if not the community center), which is why the town meeting occupies so prominent a place in our democratic pathos. And of course cosmopolitanism is a threat to community, because the *cosmos polis* destroys homogeneity; it brings in foreigners with strange ways and strange religions. The anti-Federalists at our beginning opposed the ratification of the Constitution most of all because free republican government could exist, they insisted, only in small, homogeneous places, where, as one of them said, "the manners, sentiments, and interests of the people [are] similar." Mercy Warren, one of the 18th-century founders of American isolationism, wondered if it might be possible to preserve the "pure republican spirit of the Americans" by building some sort of wall around the country, cutting them off from European luxury, on the one hand, and Western empire, on the other. She and the other anti-Federalists opposed the Constitution precisely because it would lead to the replacement of the small, homogeneous and *therefore,* they insisted, self-governing communities by the large, impersonal, commercial, eventually urban country which, they also insisted, could only be governed despotically. George Clinton, governor of New York and writing under the name of Cato, the greatest of Roman republican names, put it this way: "The progress of the commercial society begets luxury, the parent of inequality, the foe to virtue, and the enemy to restraint, [and also] ambition and voluptuousness," and eventually despotism. "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God," said Jefferson, "if ever He had a chosen people," and we all know what he had to say about the city:

> While we have land to labor then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a workbench, or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, smiths, are wanting in husbandry; but, for the general operations of manufacture, let our workshops remain in Europe. It is better to carry provisions and materials to workmen there, than bring them to the provisions and materials, and with them their manners and principles. The loss by the transportation of commodities across the Atlantic will be made up in happiness and permanence of government. The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigor. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution.

But *our* ambivalence stems from his, because he probably formulated that statement about the city on his way to Philadelphia and a meeting of the American Philosophical Society. Jefferson was, for all his rusticity, among the most urbane of Americans, the man who thought Bacon, Newton, and Locke were the three greatest men who ever lived—and there was nothing rustic about Bacon, Newton, and Locke, and nothing bucolic about the world their thought helped to build.

I AM contending that the American ambivalence toward the city has its roots in the dispute that took place at the beginning, the dispute between the men we call Federalists and those we call anti-Federalists. Residual elements of that original dispute are reflected in the later struggles between Hamilton and Jefferson, and the Hamiltonians and the Jeffersonians, and later in those between Biddle and the friends of the Bank, on the one hand, and the Jacksonians, the sturdy yeomanry, on the other; and still later in those between the Gold Republicans from the East and the William Jennings Bryan Democrats from the West, the descendants of Jackson. Bryan became famous for his imprecations against the cities: "Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country. . . ." And, of course, one can hear echoes of it still, beating in the heart of the Republicans, once again located in the Middle West, even if the Republican body comes from California or Maryland. These men dislike the effete East, or the Eastern Establishment, as much as Bryan and Jackson ever did. America may be the first new nation, the first to be established on the basis of the modern principles delineated by Hobbes and Locke, but there has seldom been a time without a significant body of opinion that distrusts modernity, its principle and its works.

Our ambivalence toward the city arises out of our acceptance and our simultaneous rejection of modernity. I mean by this, and without here elaborating it, we built on the Hobbesian-Lockean principle of self-interest, but we yearn for a good we can share in common, a common good, a community, which the younger generation has called a participatory democracy, an idea coming from Rousseau. But it is no easy task to define a common good for a civil society whose organizing principle is self-interest, whether that principle is accepted eagerly,

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which is more or less the case with the authors of the *Federalist Papers*, or reluctantly, as was true of such anti-Federalists as Melancton Smith, and true also, I think, of the greatest of the commentators on America, Tocqueville. Brotherhood cannot be willed (Tom Hayden and the New Left to the contrary notwithstanding), and the authors of the *Federalist* knew this very well, which is why they eschewed reliance on "moral and religious motives," and accepted instead the Lockean corollary of the Hobbesian-Lockean premise: the pursuit of wealth will solve the political problem, and wealth will flow naturally from the unrestrained greed of men. In less pejorative terms, the society that attains what *Federalist* Number 10 calls the first object of government—that of protecting the unequal faculties of acquiring property—will be one that directs the energies of its people into wealth-getting. It will not be a society of good Samaritans; it will, however, be a society whose members are not so likely to fall among thieves when they travel the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, or Boston to New York, because the passions of men will be directed into activities that do not lead to bloodshed and do not threaten the peace. The passion for acquisition—greed—will assume first importance under this new, this modern dispensation, and it is a passion that can be satisfied in peaceful ways. Scarcity will be overcome and, in fact, wealth will abound. The Gross National Product will assume astronomical proportions, just as Locke said it would. In this way self-interest will be served. Acquisition will be a substitute for morality; that is, acquisition will replace the morality that formerly constituted the community, the cement that bound men into a community. Acquisition becomes the substitute for brotherhood. The modern world will have less need of Samaritans, which is all to the good, Hobbes, Locke, and their epigoni would say, because there were never many *good* Samaritans anyway.

The anti-Federalists opposed this arrangement, and some of them knew exactly what they were opposing. Nevertheless, it can be said that however much the anti-Federalists talked of sturdy yeomen and republican virtue and small communities of brothers, in the end they too took their stand with Lockean acquisition. And so too did their lineal descendants of the next generation, the Jacksonians. The Jacksonians may have yearned for something in addition—Marvin Meyers shows this most perceptively in his book, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*—but they proved unwilling to pay the price for it, and in this respect too they resembled their ancestors. John Adams taunted the anti-Federalists with this unwillingness. You want republican virtue? he asked them. You want rustic simplicity? You want the small, virtuous, agrarian republic? If so, what you want is San Marino:

> A handful of poor people, living in the simplest manner, by hard labor upon the produce of a few cows, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, and pigeons, on a piece of rocky snowy ground, protected from every enemy by their situation, their superstition, and even by their poverty, having no commerce or luxury. . . .

In fact, they did not want it. Not at that price. But this has never prevented us Americans from yearning for imaginary San Marinos.

Tocqueville is the man to read on this subject. No one since Rousseau has better articulated the problems and the costs of modernity. It was one thing to share a good in common, to live in a community with a common purpose, when all men and all classes were bound to each other by the laws and the institutions of the place, sharing the tenets of a faith held in common; when the organizing principle of the regime embodied an articulation of the ends that men individually and collectively were to seek; when the principles of the regime were derived from an understanding of the human soul that placed it in an ordered universe; or to say this in more familiar language, when the civil law was patterned after the natural law and the natural law, in turn, was grounded in God's eternal law. In such a world, men and societies derive comfort from their opinion that they are living according to divine providence, or according to the natural law, and it was understood in that world that self-preservation was merely the lowest in the natural hierarchy of ends. The trouble was, there were disputes as to what that common faith would be, leading to religious wars, civil and international, and countries tended to resemble the Northern Ireland of today. But when self-preservation becomes the totality of the law of nature, as it does for Hobbes and Locke, and when the law of civil society comes to be based on *this* understanding of the natural law, promoting the materialism that would relieve man's estate even as it corrupted his soul, it is not strange that the common good becomes an elusive thing. Nor is it strange that Tocqueville was forced finally to define the common good in terms of self-interest, "the only immutable point in the human heart," he said. As to what happens generally to the soul of the man who is only told to preserve himself, Tocqueville has no solution at all. He can only regret what he foresees: the desuetude of nobility, or refined habits and embellished manners, of poetry and of philosophy itself.

In Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is to be found a comprehensive understanding of the problems of modernity. Nevertheless, he understood as well the fundamental justice of the modern principle, that gave rise to the modern liberal-democratic state, namely, the principle that all men are created equal. It is quite clear that he was passionately attached to various aspects of life in an aristocracy, but it is equally clear that he acknowledged the fundamental injustice of aristocracy. In democracy there is justice, but in democracy there is also the danger that those things that make life worth living are endangered. He may have hoped that somewhere within the new civil society there could be founded a citadel in which these things could continue to exist, if not to flourish, or from which they could be defended; a place (perhaps the university, but certainly not the modern city) relatively impervious to the onslaughts of egalitarian public opinion, but he knew enough not

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to be sanguine about this. These things—let us simply say, the arts and the life of the mind—were formerly a part of aristocracy. They were a part of the aristocratic city; and they would be jeopardized in the modern world built on equality and self-interest. Tocqueville, one might say, appreciated the justice of modernity, but he knew the price that would have to be paid for it.

WHEN we complain of our cities we do so on the ground of their alleged inhumanity, or their inhuman scale and pace; on the ground that they are not suited for a truly human life. When we, in the American context, start asking the question—what is the city?—we are in fact asking the larger question of what is the purpose of human life. The one is reflected in the other, but this is partially concealed from us nevertheless. It is concealed because we are out of the habit of asking that larger question, and we are out of the habit of asking it because it was the intention of modernity to suppress that question, or at least to suppress the *public* asking of it. For, when that question was *asked* publicly, it was *answered* publicly, that is to say, officially; and there were religious wars, and inquisitions, and censors, and, generally, no liberty, and life too often resembled the life in Hobbes's state of nature: "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." So, as I say, Hobbes and Locke intended that that question no longer be asked, and, on the whole, they were successful.

The question was asked at our beginning by the anti-Federalists, most of whom knew very well that their small, homogeneous, virtuous republics of sturdy yeomen would have to be built on the foundation of an official church; but that question was not asked or answered by the republic we did build. This republic was the large commercial republic whose first object, Madison said, was the "protection of [the] different and unequal faculties of acquiring property." We built our cities with this purpose in mind, to facilitate the making of money, which, in turn, would preserve human liberty. To this we have added only an amusement park here and there. But the great old cities we admire are admirable precisely because they reflect an official concern with the question of what is the purpose of human life. That is a noble question, capable of being answered in a noble manner. The answer given may be wrong, but it is not likely to be banal. The greatest monuments in these old cities are of course religious monuments: the Parthenon in Athens, St. Peter's in Rome, Notre Dame in Paris, Westminster Abbey in London, to say nothing of Jerusalem. They, and their adornments—the pictures, the sculpture, the frescoes, the music, the poetry—these are the things present in the old cities, built before modernity, built before self-preservation and self-interest became the sole ends of civil society. In such cities are to be found expressions of the nobler aspects of the soul, the poetic rather than the prosaic. The modern city is prosaic because modern life is prosaic. The question—what is the city?—is a reflection of the recognition of the fact that modern life is prosaic, and of our dissatisfaction with that fact in our day.

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Politics & the Parties

THE MAKING OF THE PRESIDENT—1972. By THEODORE H. WHITE. *Atheneum. 391 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JAMES Q. WILSON

THE many pleasures of reading Theodore White's accounts of our Presidential elections have in no way been dimmed by their repeated offering. They continue to be lively, vivid, and evocative, an especially remarkable achievement given the difficulties presented by the 1972 contest—a lopsided, never-in-doubt result; a continuing scandal involving campaign practices; and the deeply enigmatic personality of the victor.

It is an easy book to praise, and it deserves most of the praise it will get. The chapter on the power of the press is particularly good, a brilliant analysis by a knowledgeable but detached insider. Its obvious weaknesses are few and quickly stated—for example, a mind-numbing chapter on census data that would not even interest social scientists, whose tolerance for tedium is ordinarily quite high. And where one might wish to take issue with Mr. White, formulatng a rebuttal is no simple matter, for he has the engaging facility of being able to state his personal opinions with sufficiently ambiguous prose and with such disarming style that one is never certain whether one is fighting or shadow-boxing. He can be sharp about the issues (he leaves little doubt that he believes McGovern to have mishandled them atrociously and that Watergate was inexcusable), but he rarely lets his clarity on these matters detract from his soft-focus, subtle portraits of the personalities involved. It is hard to get mad at someone who appears to like, or at least to be fascinated by, almost everybody, and in this book Mr. White describes no enemies and few nonentities.

JAMES Q. WILSON *is professor of government at Harvard.*

The enduring value of the book will be found, not in its surface qualities, however, but in whether it helps us answer the fundamental question raised by the campaign: Why did the Democrats nominate George McGovern, and what does his candidacy signify for the two-party system in this country? It is not to White's discredit that he cannot provide a completely satisfactory answer. It can be answered, but not by a single journalist committed, necessarily, to reporting on the candidates rather than on the political process.

The fact that the gulf between Presidential politics and Presidential candidates is so wide that no author can attend adequately to both is an important clue to the distinctive character of the American electoral system. Senator McGovern became his party's nominee as the result of thousands of decisions and events taking place in countless caucuses and conventions as well as in nearly two dozen state primary elections. White clearly could not be in attendance at more than a tiny fraction of these happenings and thus, perforce, he must write about the "big" events that were highly visible—the major state primaries—and interpret them in terms of such standards as he can extract from his considerable stock of political lore. The result here is an account, scarcely more elaborate than what the press reported at the time, of the results of primaries held in New Hampshire, Florida, Wisconsin, California, and a few other places, and expressed by Mr. White in terms of a military metaphor—McGovern began with a "guerrilla organization," fought a "set piece" in Wisconsin, "rolled up the party from the Left" as things began moving his way, waged "the Battle of Tannenberg," and skillfully practiced "convention warfare from his command post."

But all this, dramatic as it is, does not really tell us whence came the fifteen hundred or so delegates that voted for Senator McGovern in Miami. And the military imagery implies more calculation, rationality, and organization than in fact existed, or even could be made to exist. For the central, striking fact about the American candidate-selection process is that it is the most decentralized, the most chaotic, and the most participatory of any large nation in the world.

We take primary elections for granted. They are used to choose candidates for most state offices in almost all states and to help choose Presidential candidates in twenty-two states plus the District of Columbia. They are unheard of in England, France, West Germany, or Scandinavia. There, party conventions or party leaders (sometimes *a* party leader) decides who will run for what office. Where we have caucuses, they are easily invaded and taken over by any well-organized group, "old-line" or "new politics," that is sufficiently motivated. In Europe, one must be a card-carrying party member and a duly-chosen delegate.

The new rules for delegate selection promulgated by the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection, known more familiarly (and accurately) as the McGovern Commission, as much for the proclivities of its staff as for the identity of its chairman, continued the process of democratizing the choice of delegates that had been started in Oregon in 1910 when that state adopted the first true Presidential preference primary. These new rules ended the power of state party leaders to hand-pick delegates, opened up local caucuses to more participation, prevented party leaders from voting by proxy, abolished the unit rule in all non-primary states, and prevented elected office-holders from being *ex officio* members of state delegations. The effect of these rules was to make control of the delegate-selection process far more precarious than it had been (and for most delegations, it had long been quite chancy) and to give the edge to

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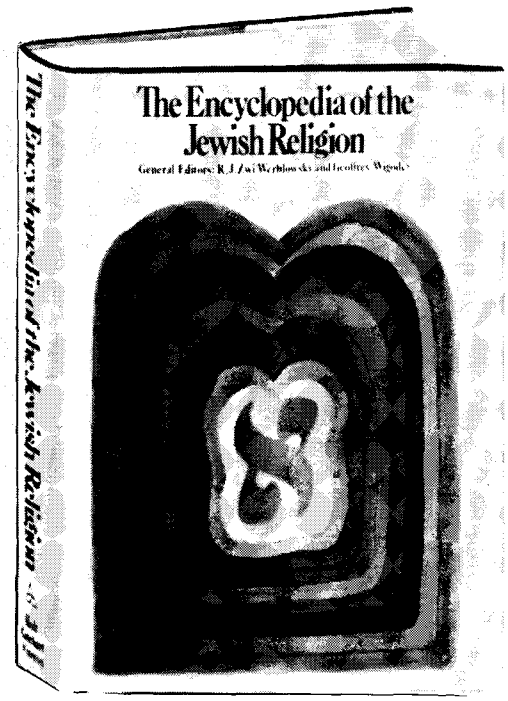
Did you know that the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is unknown in the Bible and Talmud? (see page 57) That Judaism frowns on celibacy? (see page 81) That the mystical Kabbalah has doctrines in common with Hinduism? (see page 389)



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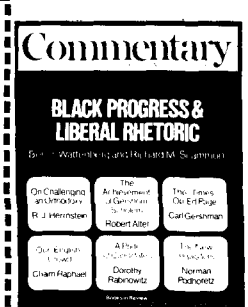

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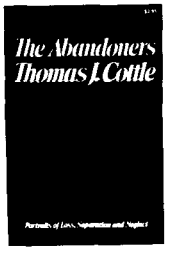

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whichever candidate could most effectively mobilize groups that could dominate local caucuses. And then there was the most celebrated rule of all, that requiring all state Democratic parties to take "affirmative steps to encourage . . . representation of minority groups on the national convention delegation in reasonable relationship to the group's presence in the population of the states." From this rule emerged the controversy over the use of "quotas" for women, blacks, and the young.

Two questions arise: To what extent did these rule changes make possible the McGovern nomination? Are these rules good or bad for a two-party system? White believes the so-called quota rule was bad, not because it helped McGovern win the convention (he suggests it probably did not), but because anything that smacks of quotas is itself wrong and, besides, the quota issue helped the Republicans. As for the other rule changes, they represent to White a "prodigious exercise in intelligence," of the "same order of thoughtfulness as produced the American Constitution."

The theory that the new rules aided McGovern, and that the McGovern supporters deliberately arranged things this way, has been most forcefully advanced by Penn Kemble and Josh Muravchik ("The New Politics and the Democrats," COMMENTARY, December 1972). To correct the alleged excesses of these rules is one of the principal tasks of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, of which Kemble is executive director. Their argument in essence is this: the new rules were confusing, they were interpreted and enforced by their authors who were also McGovern partisans, they led by means of quotas to an unrepresentative convention, and they destroyed or weakened local party leadership and substituted for it a band of McGovern enthusiasts incapable of (and perhaps uninterested in) appealing successfully to the broader electorate.

White's book provides almost no evidence by which to test this theory; given the necessary limits on his time and energy, it would be miraculous if it had. Since no systematic evidence is available, we must for now accept or reject the theory on the basis of our own best conjectures. Most of the reasons advanced in opposition to the McGovern rules strike me as unconvincing or at best equally applicable to the old rules previously in effect. The old rules were also confusing and they also were interpreted and enforced by persons who stood to gain by them. The management of party caucuses and conventions on behalf of the Stevenson and Kennedy candidacies by the "regular" party leadership was every bit as manipulative or chaotic or both as was the control of these caucuses and conventions by activists on behalf of McGovern. The quota system is repugnant to democratic theory, but it probably decided no Democratic primary election and is not, in principle at least, inconsistent with a very different convention result. There were, after all, plenty of women, blacks, and young people prepared to vote for Hubert Humphrey or Henry Jackson. It so happens that most did not get to Miami. The 1972 convention was surely "unrepresentative" in the sense that the delegates were unlike rank-and-file Democratic voters in personal characteristics, yet the same could be said of almost every Democratic convention —how many $9,000-a-year teachers or policemen do you find in any delegation at any time? Much of the party leadership—most Congressmen, most big-city mayors—was excluded from the convention, but they are also "excluded" from the candidate-selection process in most states most of the time, because ordinarily (Presidential politics is a conspicuous but rare exception) candidates are chosen by primary elections, not by conventions.

Even if the new rules helped McGovern, it was in many places because McGovern's opponents simply did not make a serious effort to use the rules to their own advantage. Labor unions could have dominated many local caucuses, but often they were caught napping or believed that they could walk in the back door.

I do not wish to overstate this

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point of view; it is at best a theory and in many places could no doubt be refuted by a showing of specific examples of the rules determining the outcome rather than simply determining the process. But it is at least as plausible a theory as the one that the McGovern Commission stole the nomination for its chairman.

How, then, did McGovern win and what does his winning signify for the Democratic party? The crucial feature of the McGovern movement was not to be found in the rules it invented or the stratagems it employed, *but in the motivation and ideas of its participants.* The McGovernites understood this thoroughly. That is why they called themselves, collectively, a "movement"—they were committed to a certain view of politics, to a set of policies, and to a candidate above all else. At the grass-roots level, they were amateurs, by which I mean not that they were unskillful but that they were driven by a desire to see a vision of the good society realized and not merely or chiefly by the desire to win. The significance of the exclusion of the Congressmen and mayors from the convention is that these were the most visible, but by no means the only party members for whom winning was more important than the ideas with which one wins.

The McGovern Commission did not launch the process by which a movement could take over a party, nor in all probability were its rules essential to its success. The Goldwater supporters captured the Republican party in 1964 without first "reforming" the rules, and William Jennings Bryan captured the Democratic convention in 1896 when politics scarcely had any rules at all. No doubt the McGovern rules facilitated this process, especially since the rule-enforcers were part and parcel of the McGovern high command. But the events of the 1960's gave birth to a political generation determined to alter fundamentally American government and its policies; the openness of American politics, the themes established by the media, and the legacy of guilt besetting the party leadership because of the 1968 convention helped that move-

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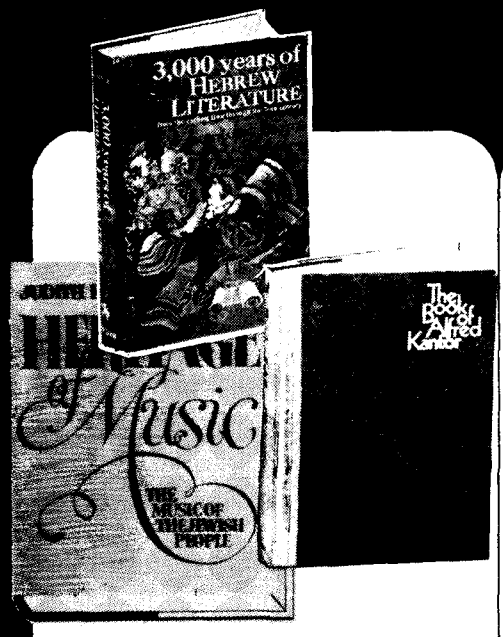

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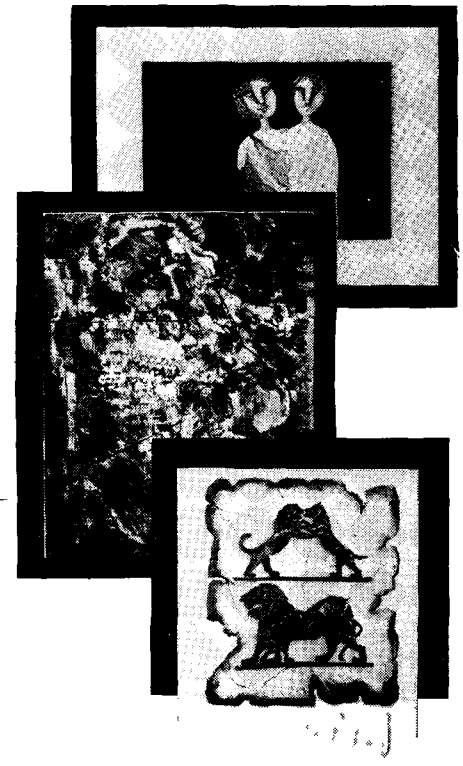

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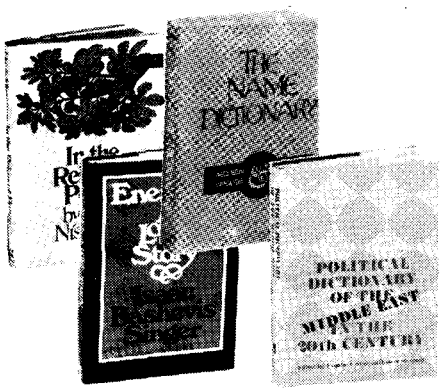

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ment win. All of these points White develops well.

What McGovern had to do and say in order to arouse and maintain the enthusiasm of his movement followers, however, rendered him incapable of attracting a majority of the voters and thus of winning the Presidency. McGovern lost because he was nominated, and because of what people inferred of the intentions of his supporters from the way in which he was nominated.

A two-party system in which either candidate or both is the apparent instrument of an ideological minority is not a viable basis for democratic government. The internal democratization of the parties has been underway throughout this century, beginning with the adoption of the primary election and continuing with such piecemeal reforms as the abolition of the two-thirds rule by the Democrats in 1936, the rise of the club movement in New York, California, and elsewhere, and the adoption of the McGovern rules. Long before McGovern, however, it was possible to take a convention by storm: Wendell Willkie did it in 1940 and Dwight Eisenhower in 1952, and in both cases the decisive role was played by groups *outside* the regular party leadership operating through the media and in key primary races. The crucial difference between those nominations and the McGovern candidacy was the absence, in the former instances, of any mass movement that had to be mobilized and sustained by ideological appeals.

The two-party system, which is the key to the operation of the Presidency and Congress, depends crucially on each party being strongly motivated to do whatever is necessary and proper to win. In 1972, one party failed to do what was necessary and the other did many things that were not proper. Losing an election always has been a natural and powerful corrective for a party that strayed too far from the center of political opinion. But political memories are short, and whereas the Republicans had the lessons of 1964 vividly before them, the Democrats had to hark back (few did) to 1896 to find a comparable case. The other candidates of movement politics—Eugene McCarthy and (to an extent) Robert F. Kennedy—never won the nomination.

It is not at all perverse to suggest that the internal democratization of both parties may already have gone too far to enable them to perform their essential role of offering to voters a serious choice (by "serious" I mean not philosophically serious, but one in which each candidate has a reasonable chance of winning). The more open the party machinery, the greater the ease with which it can be used to offer a non-serious choice. V. O. Key, Jr. devoted a good part of his impressive scholarly career to showing, in painstaking detail, why the most important democratizing device, the primary election, in fact probably adds little to democracy and may indeed detract from it by allowing heavily-financed candidates whose appeal is only to an enthusiastic minority to win nominations.

The matter is not easily decided, however. If an "open" party encourages capture by an ideological movement, it also prevents its permanent control by a corrupt oligarchy. Striking the correct balance between access and power is a difficult task, but it is not made any easier by those who compare favorably all reforms (save those embodying quotas) to the efforts of the Founding Fathers. The cure for the defects of democracy is not always more democracy. At the very least, the organization and conduct of our parties deserves more discussion than we now are giving them, for their condition is more grave than merely the McGovern debacle would indicate.

The Old Realism

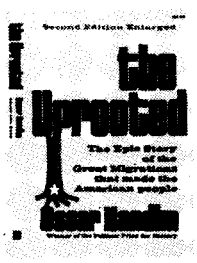
THE NEW JOURNALISM. By TOM WOLFE. With an Anthology edited by TOM WOLFE and E. W. JOHNSON. *Harper & Row. 394 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by JANE LARKIN CRAIN

DURING the early 1960's, working more or less independently, journalists like Gay Talese, Jimmy Breslin, and Tom Wolfe, and novelists-turned-journalists like Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and James Baldwin, were beginning to employ certain novelistic techniques in the writing of nonfiction. By 1966, the work these "New Journalists" were doing had not only been recognized as a movement and given a name, but had also, according to Tom Wolfe, their principal spokesman, begun to "wreak havoc in the literary world," unleashing there a flood of "bitterness, envy, and resentment" over the journalistic usurpation of both literary techniques and literary insights. Without quite realizing it, the New Journalists had discovered a form for nonfiction that within the course of the next several years was—as Wolfe sees it—to "wipe out the novel as literature's main event," and was to become "the most important literature being written in America today."

JANE LARKIN CRAIN *reviewed* Looking Back *by Joyce Maynard in our July issue.*

"An epic of uprooted souls"



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In his long introductory essay to *The New Journalism*, an anthology of representative selections, Wolfe compares the distaste of the "literary establishment" for the New Journalism to the distaste engendered among the literati of the 18th century by the appearance of the realistic novel. Just as, for example, "Dr. Johnson dismissed Fielding's novels by saying his characters were so 'low life' you would think Fielding himself were an 'ostler,' " so too, Wolfe believes, do the various dismissers and disparagers of the New Journalism object to it not because it is technically inferior or inconsequential, but rather because it concerns itself with people and things its detractors consider inferior or inconsequential. Also, and more importantly perhaps, it profoundly antagonizes literary academics who feel that the absorption of the New Journalism in the details of everyday experience endangers certain notions in which they have a vested interest, like "a higher reality, the cosmic dimension, eternal values, and the moral consciousness."

WOLFE'S sense of the importance of the New Journalists stems first of all from his conviction that they are the only contemporary writers who haven't deserted "the rich terrain of the novel: namely, society, the social tableau, manners and morals, the 'whole business of the way we live now.' " Instead of sustaining the great traditions of the realistic novel, the writers of modern fiction have regressed to a time before the techniques of realism were developed. Rather than attending to what is actually taking place in the culture, modern fiction relies on what Wolfe calls the "conventions of No Background, No Place Name, No Dialogue, and the Inexplicables." Modern fiction, preoccupied as it is with "myth" and "mystery," sets its characters adrift in a sea of mystification and paradox, thereby depriving its audience of all sense of recognition and hence of any emotional involvement in the scene.

In short, modern fiction has, as Wolfe puts it, "left behind for the New Journalists quite a nice little body of material: the whole of American society, in effect":

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"[T]he generation gap," "the counter-culture," "black consciousness," "sexual permissiveness," "the death of God," . . . the abandonment of proprieties, pieties, decorums, connoted by "go-go-funds," "fast money," swinger groovey hippie drop-out pop Beatles Andy Baby Jane Bernie Huey Eldridge LSD marathon encounter stone underground rip-off. . . . This whole side of American life that gushed forth when postwar American affluence finally blew the lid off —all this the novelists simply turned away from, gave up by default.

It was in the attempt to capture and record the dynamics of these various manifestations of contemporary life that the New Journalists rediscovered, "by trial and error . . . the devices that gave the realistic novel its unique power, variously known as its 'immediacy,' its 'concrete reality,' its 'emotional involvement,' its 'gripping' or 'absorbing' quality." The essential devices of the New Journalism are defined as faithful reconstruction, "scene by scene," of external settings, as opposed to summary and superficial historical narrative; recording of dialogue as a means of "establishing and defining character"; use of "point-of-view" narration, thus evoking any given character's sense of his own situation; and the extensive cataloguing of the external props of a character's life—his clothes, mannerisms, furniture, friends, relatives, attitudes, and gestures, and all the other details "symbolic" of people's "status life . . . of the entire pattern of behavior and possessions through which people express their position in the world or what they think it is or what they hope it to be."

No one, Wolfe asserts, was ever "moved to tears" by the characters of, to use his examples, "Homer, Sophocles, Molière, Racine, Sidney, or Shakespeare." But "even the impeccable Lord Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, had cried . . . over the death of Dickens's Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*." The introduction, then, of realism into literature was like "the introduction of electricity into machine technology. . . . It raised the state of the art to a new magnitude." Yet, says Wolfe, the New Journalism surpasses even the achievement of the realistic novel: "it enjoys an advantage so obvious, so built-in, one almost forgets what a power it has: The simple fact that the reader knows *all this actually happened*." This is where the ingredients of exhaustive reporting of "facts" come into the picture. According to Wolfe, it is the element of the factual in the New Journalism that removes all "screens" between literature and its audience and puts "the writer one step closer to the absolute involvement of the reader that Henry James and James Joyce dreamed of and never achieved."

IN DISMISSING just about every major critical theory on the nature and purpose of literature, Wolfe seems to assume as self-evident a role for literature that is in effect one of handmaiden to the social sciences. In his impatience with sophisticated aesthetic questions, he also seems to assume that people now read Dickens or Balzac for their detailed reproductions of the social milieus of 19th-century London or Paris. Moreover, one gets the impression that he doesn't realize that people are still reading Shakespeare or Sophocles for any reason whatever.

The truth is, however, that there is more to the nature of literature than the extent to which it does or does not provide an approximation of the reader's own emotional experience in the culture of his time; more to the distinction among Shakespeare, Dickens, and Hunter Thompson than the presence or absence of detailed reportage and the consequent degree to which each author does or does not "absorb" his audience; more to the history of literature than the differences between those who preceded the 18th-century novelists and those who have followed them; and more to the dynamics of the contemporary literary scene than the ways in which Tom Wolfe has or has not surpassed Balzac, who in turn had or had not surpassed Shakespeare.

One of the main thrusts of Wolfe's essay is the assertion that the techniques of the New Journalism are the only truly effective means of capturing the "reality" of particular cultural phenomena. In the course of this argument, Wolfe winds up in the position of equating the desire to extract from literature certain "truths" that might be said to illuminate the course of "everyday" experience with an indifference to the "way people really live." He also makes connections between the operations of the critical intelligence in an effort to understand the dynamics of contemporary society and a tacit contempt for "real people." He says, in effect, that only through the offices of the New Journalism, with its various representations of "immediacy," can anything worth knowing about anything be brought to light, and anyone who feels that there might be more efficacious ways of looking at the world is just a "gentleman in the grandstand," or a "man of letters," who for whatever reasons of temperament can't bring himself to engage fully in the cultural life of his times. Literature, in other words, is supposed to show "what's happen-

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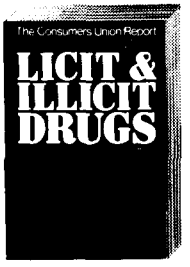

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ing." It can be left to the pedants to try to make sense of it.

All Wolfe's scorn notwithstanding, however, it is literature, and —however one may blush to say it —even "life" itself, and not merely posturing intellectuals, that raise questions about the ethical or theological dimensions of art or about the nature of aesthetic response. "Reality" is a complex and problematic business, and the "mind" and the "emotions" are not luminous, self-defining arenas about which there is no good reason to speculate. It was, indeed, largely in an attempt to explore such problems through art that much of the writing Wolfe himself extols was written, including that of Flaubert, James, and Joyce.

IN TURNING from Wolfe's essay to the selections in his anthology, the great temptation is to judge them merely in terms of the extent to which they are or aren't embarrassed by his claims for them. Taking his essay at face value, one might reasonably assume that what would unfold in the anthology would be a representation of the social milieu not just equal to but better than that given in *Remembrance of Things Past* or *War and Peace*, and a depiction of subtle and complex psychological relationship of a sort striven for but never quite captured in *Ulysses* or *The Portrait of a Lady*.

Although there is nothing even vaguely approaching these heights in the pages of *The New Journalism*, there are selections (most notably Wolfe's own) of remarkable technical accomplishment, and several dramatically perceptive studies of some of the issues by which contemporary America is, in fact, profoundly troubled. Once these pieces are absolved of the burden of either succeeding or failing in terms of Wolfe's extravagant and, finally, somewhat silly standards, it becomes possible to judge them for what they are: sometimes thoughtful and comprehensive and sometimes drastically biased and narrow accounts of diverse aspects of the times.

The works in this collection range over a wide variety of subjects: movie stars, directors, and producers; the Vietnam war and the anti-war movement; macrobiotic diets; Martin Luther King and the "old" civil-rights movement; a baton-twirling institute at Ole Miss; murder; ethnic political pressure groups; football; Presidential campaigning; the New York police; the commodity futures market; and the Hell's Angels.

Taken as a whole, these pieces embody just about all the ways of looking at American society that have become common currency during the course of the last ten or fifteen years. They are couched in the language of polarization and crisis; preoccupied with the presentation of anxiety, confusion, and dissatisfaction; permeated by a sense of unbridgeable distances among regionally determined sensibilities; suspicious of traditional values and the possibilites of meloration: based, in short, on the implicit proposition that to be that "secretary of American society" which Wolfe claims as the highest office for a writer, necessarily implies the recording of increasingly mindless violence, frustration, and a pervasive climate of decadence and amorality.

Far from placing primary weight on the individual "reality" of the lives they investigate, then, the New Journalists typically place their characters in a context of passivity and beleaguerment every bit as diffuse and "inexplicable" as the settings of that "modern fiction" Wolfe has gone to such great lengths to debunk. For the most part, the characters in this New Journalism seem victimized by their own illusions and insecurities, and by the breakdown of moral and rational order in the culture itself. The tendency to metaphysical incoherence, displayed in Beckett, Camus, or Kafka is replaced in this context by a species of sociological nihilism, and all that can be known about anything are various manifestations of instability it is now customary to regard as being intrinsic to American society.

Once it has been acknowledged that there is nothing inherent in the New Journalism that would reasonably inspire the kind of virulent hostility toward it that Wolfe dwells on in his essay, it must also be said that if these works represent the most energized attempt being made in contemporary America to get to the bottom of things, we have indeed come a long and dismal way from the days of Dickens and Balzac. For what these and other truly great writers do, in the final analysis, is to provide the basis for all those careful generalizations from particular cases, all those drawings of meaningful distinctions, and all those attempts to make soundly based judgments of value which so much of the New Journalism dismisses as either stuffy or obsolete.

Bon Vivant

ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN: MY YOUNG YEARS. By ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN. *Knopf. 512 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by LOUIS BERG

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one regrets his decision to confine this heavy tome of light reminiscence to his salad days. The narrative ends abruptly when, at thirty, he reached the age of discretion, so that what we get from it, all we get from it, is an overextended portrait of the artist as a pampered prodigy, a teen-age Casanova, an exceedingly spoiled young man.

At the age of ten Rubinstein was sent from his parental home in Lodz, Poland, to study piano under a famous teacher, Heinrich Barth, and he never returned. He was scarcely thirteen when the *haut monde* adopted him, petted him, lionized him, dazzled him, and his Orthodox Jewish parents lost him forever. Much too soon his course was charted for him, his career predestined. He was a born pianist, with the spatular fingers and a 12-key reach—his little finger was as long as its neighbor—that made technique come easy, and he had genuine musicianship. His brilliant playing soon commanded attention. His natural charm, ingenuousness, affability, ardor, made him an immediate social success. Older women were impelled to mother him, and to sleep with him. Fellow artists, noted musicians, helped and guided his career. Joseph Joachim, although a violinist, became his patron and his mentor. Paderewski heard him play, embraced him, and predicted a great future, which in itself was sufficient to insure it. Soon Rubinstein was performing before, as the saying went, "the crowned heads of Europe."

Before he was twenty-one he had met almost all of the important personages worth meeting—the list he offers is awesome: King Edward VII of Great Britain, the Duke of Connaught, the Duke of Alba, Queen Mother Marie Christina of Spain, Josef Pilsudski and Count Potocki of Poland, to name a few, and not to mention the King of Cambodia, who is given no other name. In his own world he mingled with Saint Saëns, Ravel, Gorky, Scriabin, Norman Douglas, Sascha Guitry, Picasso, John Singer Sargent, Casals, Chaliapin, Richard Strauss. He can hardly be blamed if his head was turned. It is not every artist who is initiated into the mysteries of whorehouse sex (naturally none but the best) by the likes of

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the great Chaliapin, or privileged to have affairs with the mother and two daughters of an elegant household.

All of this Rubinstein describes with zest but without discrimination. Reliving the days of his youth he recaptures—or has never lost—its wide-eyed wonder or its slapdash spirit. When he was still a prodigy a critic remarked of his playing: "A great talent, the promise of a brilliant career, but still immature." Curiously the same can be said of his octogenarian literary performance. He is as flashy with the pen as he was then on the keyboard, racing along *con brio* with never a pause over a cliché or a false note.

Some of it, most of it perhaps for those with a taste for vicarious pleasures, is entertaining. He is a born raconteur, and has a naughty but not malicious ear for gossip. It is titillating to learn that the foremost soprano of her day, Emmy Destinn, had a snake tattooed on her leg, encircling it from ankle to upper thigh—our young amorist followed its progress with more than his eyes. It is painful for an admirer of his works to learn that the eminent Scriabin was so vain as to compose an opus, *Mystère*, to be played only in a temple designed and built for that purpose. Nor does Rubinstein spare himself, telling how after a frolicsome night with two ladies of pleasure he found himself unable to foot the bill and was forced to part with a pair of treasured cuff links.

Eventually, however, the stress on *la vie Parisienne* grows wearisome, the single theme is too long maintained; one longs for less froth and more substance, and above all for mature judgment. Rubinstein, however, is blessed, or cursed, with total recall. We are spared not a single one of his conquests, his triumphs, or his indiscretions; we must follow his butterfly flitting from concert hall to concert hall (complete with program), from drawing room to drawing room, from boudoir to boudoir. It is the ormolu age he describes, a world in which polish meant more than substance, decoration more than design, a world in which elegance in dress and manners covered coarseness of conduct and crudeness of thought. It was also a world that gave birth to some of the greatest of composers and most gifted of virtuosos. But the petty princelings, the grand dukes and grand duchesses ruled over this world, as they did over their vast domains, and the artist was at their mercy—or so young Rubinstein believed. "I want you to play a short program alone," said the Baroness Gustave de Rothschild, "and after an intermission you will accompany Miss Destinn in two arias from *Carmen* and the last scene of *Salome*! Your fee is a thousand francs."

The book ends on his thirtieth year, with Rubinstein still the spoiled darling of fortune. World War I is raging and others are suffering unendurable miseries, but our hero is on his way, in charming company, from Cádiz to Buenos Aires where he is to give a concert. In his possession is a treasured portrait and endearing inscription from Alfonso R. of Spain, and a cablegram affirming an engagement he had long desired—his now because the Guitry Company which had been hired refused to sign in view of the submarine menace.. The war has given him his greatest break and he is a happy man.

Russia's "Democratic Movement"

UNCENSORED RUSSIA: PROTEST AND DISSENT IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE UNOFFICIAL MOSCOW JOURNAL "A CHRONICLE OF CURRENT EVENTS." Edited, translated, and with a commentary by PETER REDDAWAY. Foreword by JULIUS TELESIN. *American Heritage Press. 499 pp. $10.00.*

THE HEIRS OF STALIN: DISSIDENCE AND THE SOVIET REGIME 1953-1970. By ABRAHAM ROTHBERG. *Cornell University Press. 450 pp. $14.50.*

Reviewed by MAURICE FRIEDBERG

IDEAS have a way of begetting offspring that prove embarrassing to the very people whose thought may have inspired them. One wonders, for example, what the authors of the recently fashionable theory of "convergence"—which in its broadest outlines foresees ever growing similarities between the United States and the Soviet Union—would think of the blurb concocted by the American editors of *Uncensored Russia*, a meticulously annotated and superbly translated version of the first eleven issues of the illegal (and now defunct) Soviet journal, *A Chronicle of Current Events*. This journal is described as "the counter-cultural equivalent of the more radical underground press in the United States," yet any similarity between the two exists, of course, only in the imagination. To cite the most obvious difference, whereas our "underground press" is readily available on newsstands and by subscription, the *Chronicle* (which had been appearing more or less bi-monthly from April 1968 until fall 1972) was treated by the Soviet authorities as a criminal publication which, to quote article 70 of the Soviet Penal Code, contained "slanderous fabrications which defame the Soviet political or social system." As article 70 continued, "the circulation or preparation or keeping . . . of literature of such content shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term of six months to seven years, with or without additional exile for a term of two to five years, or by exile for a term of two to five years."

Russia's so-called "Democratic Movement," with which the *Chronicle* was closely identified, is numerically very small, unorganized, and hardly influential even among the intelligentsia where most of its adherents are to be found. One would never guess this from the Western European and American press, which has overestimated its dimensions and impact while at least until recently failing to appreciate the importance of its mere existence. If memory serves, no Western observer (not excluding this reviewer) would have dared predict even a decade ago that not one but several underground political *journals* (as distinct from occasional typewritten collections of verse and prose) would eventually begin to appear in the USSR—and that

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these would reflect a political spectrum ranging from mildly dissident Communism to nearly open fascism. While many of these journals are short-lived, others can boast of an admirable resilience and longevity. Thus, the typewritten *Chronicle of Current Events* had, between mid-1968 and the end of 1972, succeeded in bringing out no fewer than twenty-six issues.

The *Chronicle* did not act as spokesman for any one group. Its overall tendency might be described as moderate, libertarian, and ostensibly "legal" in the Soviet context, since it limited itself to questions of civil liberties as they are theoretically guaranteed to Soviet citizens by the laws now in effect and as they are articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which the USSR is a signatory. (Indeed, the first appearance of the paper in 1968 coincided with worldwide observances of Human Rights Year, and its masthead continued to call attention to this fact.) Not surprisingly, any given issue of *The Chronicle,* which confined itself almost exclusively to reportage, was likely to depend for its content mainly on accounts of searches, arrests, and trials. Occasionally there were also texts of petitions, open letters, and, less frequently, brief notices of other illegal publications circulating in the country. In editing this mass of material for the foreign reader, Peter Reddaway, of the London School of Economics, has done an altogether admirable job, avoiding repetition and focusing attention on the *Chronicle*'s principal concerns—reports of political demonstrations, news from prisons and mental hospitals where dissidents are often incarcerated, persecutions of various ethnic and religious groups, etc. In addition to providing a sense of continuity and coherence, he has also unobtrusively supplied much valuable background material.

SOME of the events discussed in *Uncensored Russia* are also dealt with by Abraham Rothberg in *The Heirs of Stalin,* a brisk, well-written account of the changing fortunes of Soviet reformers and liberals in the nearly two decades since Stalin's death. Indeed, its broader chronological scope makes this a valuable companion to Reddaway's volume, even though Rothberg, who is the author of the first book-length study of Solzhenitsyn,* tends in my opinion to overemphasize the purely literary manifestations of the reformers' struggle against the Stalinists. Rothberg's prognoses for the future are gloomy. In his view, the current Soviet establishment could not thoroughly disavow Stalinism even if it truly wanted to, for such a move would amount to political suicide:

> . . . Any denigration of Stalin denigrates [the heirs of Stalin], any assault on him or his record is an attack on them and their records, because they were Stalin's men. . . . Thoroughgoing de-Stalinization would, consequently, involve naming names and places and dates, and assigning blame; it would involve purges, trials, and punishments on such a scale that it would not only threaten the heirs of Stalin personally, but might even overturn the entire edifice of Soviet power.

If there is little hope for liberalization from the top of Soviet society, there is, Rothberg believes, not much hope from the bottom either, for the reformers have little contact with the Russian people. "The masses," he writes, "seem as hostile to the Solzhenitsyns, Yakirs, Yesenin-Volpins, and Grigorenkos as the Party press reports. . . . The dissidents are alienated from the workers, the peasants, the military, and the government bureaucracy, so that they have neither a mass base nor political leverage of great strength."

On the face of it, Rothberg's pessimism seems well-founded. Recent months have witnessed an intensification of Soviet efforts to destroy the democratic movement. A number of those who figure in Reddaway's volume, like Pyotr Yakir, for example, were given their freedom only to be jailed once again. The son of a Soviet Jewish general murdered by Stalin, Yakir, a tireless champion of minority causes, now has publicly "confessed" and repudiated his activities. Another dissident, Yuri Galanskov, died in prison at the age of thirty-three. Still others, like Alexander Yesenin-Volpin, son of the famous poet, and Valeri Chalidze, have in effect been deported abroad by first being granted permission to leave the country, then being deprived of the right to return home. There is no doubt then that the authorities have succeeded at least partially in decapitating Russia's small democratic movement.

Yet there are also indications that dissent has by no means been crushed, as witness the recent outspoken interviews of Andrei Sakharov with Western newsmen. The Jewish movement in the Soviet Union is of course one major instance of vitality; the recent upsurges of Lithuanian and Ukrainian nationalism are others. Notwithstanding the persuasiveness of Rothberg's reasoning, and in spite of the fact that liberal forces in the USSR are in disarray at the moment, one should not write off the possible long-range impact of the mere existence—however modest or timid—of some forms of public dissent within the Soviet Union. Recent waves of police repression are convincing evidence that Soviet rulers regard the phenomenon of dissent with serious concern, and they ought to know.

* *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: The Major Novels,* Cornell University Press, 1971.

The Southern Liberal

RALPH MCGILL: REPORTER. By HAROLD H. MARTIN. *Atlantic-Little, Brown. 344 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER M. WILLIAMS

SOUTHERN liberals have been all but canonized by the North, and it is important that they be seen for what they actually have been: people who struggled and often suffered in the cause of a decent South but who often had a limited understanding of its problems and the necessary solutions to them. Almost in spite of himself, Harold H. Martin shows us

ROGER M. WILLIAMS *is a senior editor of* Saturday Review/World *magazine.*

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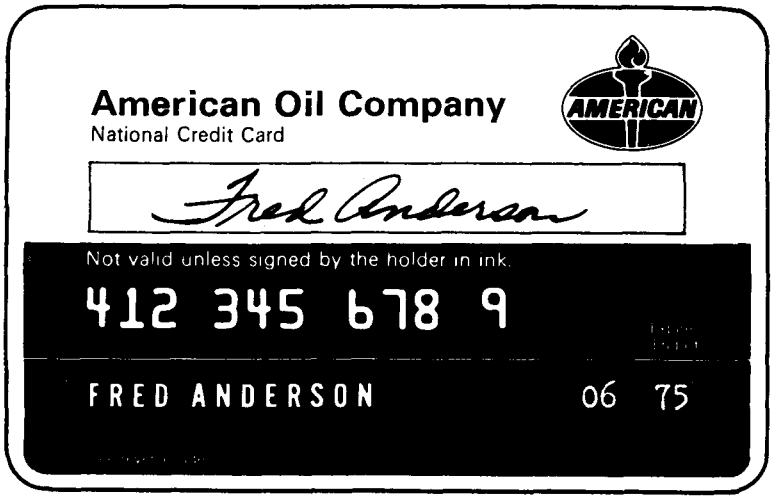

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glimpses of these limits of Southern liberalism—and of his subject, Ralph McGill—in this smoothly written and admiring portrait.

McGill was the leading Southern liberal of our time, a gentle, humane man honored throughout the world for his writings in behalf of progress in the Old Confederacy. The Tennessee-born McGill, who died in 1969, was a newspaper columnist, magazine writer, author, and globe-trotting lecturer, the best known of a band of liberal Southern journalist-writers that also included North Carolina's Jonathan Daniels and Mississippi's Hodding Carter. His home forum was the Atlanta *Constitution*, where his nationally syndicated column ran seven days a week. As generous with his time as with his words, he was a paternal spirit behind several younger Southern liberal writers, including Eugene Patterson of his own paper (and later of the Washington *Post*) and the late Bill Baggs of the Miami *News*.

No one personified better than McGill the efforts, agonies, and shortcomings of the South's "good people," that small minority of whites who tried to goad their region out of its adherence to the idea of the black man's inferiority. As Martin never tires of pointing out, McGill was a man deeply moved by discrimination and disadvantage—although more on a personal than a societal level. He helped countless individual black people get ahead in the white world; he sent clothes to a little German girl he had met in Heidelberg after World War II; he took the time to reply, often at length, to the most insulting letters from readers of his newspaper columns. As a writer, McGill had the gift of great insight into his native region, as well as regions far beyond. He could see the claims of a "New South" (reasserted by a *Time* cover story only two years ago) for what they were: a fiction sustained by succeeding generations of white Southerners trying to convince the world that their race problem was really solved. No W. J. Cash, he nevertheless relished and understood Southern history, its small ironies as well as its grand sweep, and he was an appreciator of Cash's teachings.

Early on McGill spoke out against the new surge of Southern Republicanism that was intent on capturing the votes of the alienated segregationists who had deserted the Democrats; against the notion that blacks should wait patiently for the rights that were theirs; against the assertion that the Freedom Riders of the early 1960's were mere troublemakers or *agents provocateurs* of the North; even against, on rare occasions, the Southern mania for college football. On the national scene, where he greatly enjoyed operating, he was a staunch opponent of both McCarthyism and the unregulated ownership of firearms, two especially popular causes in the South.

For taking positions like these, McGill was reviled by the less reconstructed among his fellow whites as "Red Ralph" and "Rastus." His life was threatened, and his house was bombed. Eventually, however, the white South came to hold him in the same (equivocal) regard it did Martin Luther King and the NAACP, finding him, at the least, an adversary infinitely preferable to the real radicals of the North. McGill helped this appreciation along, late in his career, by supporting the Vietnam war and opposing "black power."

Martin brings out the essence, but little more, of McGill's curious relationship with the *Constitution*, "his" newspaper for forty years. The *Constitution* has long had a reputation—based largely on the writing of McGill himself—that outstrips its performance. Its penurious non-coverage of important news of the civil-rights movement (including, incredibly, the Selma-Montgomery march) was a deep embarrassment to McGill, but he was powerless to change the situation. As Martin points out, McGill never controlled the news sections of the paper, only the editorial page; and in 1960, his elevation to publisher pushed him even farther away from decisions governing news coverage. Martin rightly credits Jack Tarver, the *Constitution*'s president, with having protected McGill from the pressures of readers and advertisers in the 1940's and 1950's, but he fails to blame Tarver for the decline of the paper that so shamed McGill later on.

The great bulk of *Ralph McGill: Reporter* is taken up with a straightforward and on the whole uncritical account of McGill's efforts and achievements. Only rarely does Martin sound a note of criticism, and he consistently fails to place McGill, and indeed the entire phenomenon of Southern liberalism, in perspective. For the truth is that Ralph McGill, far from being a militant champion of integration all his days, let alone a radical or even a Northern style liberal, was a man who identified to a large degree with the Southern establishment and who often sought to protect its interests. (This establishment, to be sure, was not the moss-backed, race-baiting element of popular Northern mythology, but the cultivated, semi-progressive, business-oriented leadership that has ruled Atlanta for at least four decades.) Like his newspaper, the *Constitution*, McGill attacked the vulnerable targets—the Ku Klux Klan and openly racist politicians—while going easy on the professional and business elite that controlled Southern society from the top down. As Martin writes in one of his few analytical moments, ". . . throughout nearly three decades, [McGill] was the leading thinker of his region, but only as far and as fast as his instincts told him he could go without losing his audience."

McGill suffered from another fundamental shortcoming: the Southern liberal's satisfaction in the uniqueness, including the unique perversity, of Southern society. Whatever threatened that uniqueness threatened the liberal's as well. Thus in the late 1960's Hodding Carter could publish an article in the New York *Times Magazine* declaring plaintively that there really were singular and good things in Southern society that should be saved, one of which was the warm individual relations between many blacks and whites.

McGill, Martin says simply on another occasion, "found it necessary for almost a decade during the late 40's and early 50's to be extremely conservative in his public utterances on racial matters. He opposed a federal anti-lynch law and a fair-employment-practices act on the grounds that the states them-

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selves must provide that protection to the Negro. He repeated over and over that neither he nor anybody else in Georgia, black or white, was advocating any form of social equality, or any breaking down of the old patterns of segregation in the schools." Indeed, we discover that McGill actually opposed school desegregation before the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown* v. *Board* made it the law. Even when he anticipated the decision, as most informed Southerners did in the early 1950's, he could not bring himself to advocate it. He merely warned "the people" that school segregation was coming to an end. In defense of his subject, Martin suggests that McGill privately favored the desegregation he could not publicly support, but there is little evidence of this.

McGill altered these views considerably in later years, and on many other issues, racial matters included, he was indeed ahead of mainstream Southern thought. The fact remains, however, that he and his fellow Southern liberals were seldom as far ahead as the North believed them to be, or as Harold Martin suggests they were. Their efforts in the area of civil rights were sporadic and unpredictable, virtually never going to the point of a call for radical or systemic change. The liberals' concern, more often than not, was to get the South to accept and prepare for the inevitable changes that were overtaking it. This was a necessary role, at times a noble one, but one that demands a more complex understanding than Martin has provided.

Officers of the Law

VICE SQUAD. By ROBERT H. WILLIAMS. *Crowell. 320 pp. $7.95.*
CITY POLICE. By JONATHAN RUBINSTEIN. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 455 pp. $10.00.*
SERPICO. By PETER MAAS. *Viking. 314 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

THESE three books are the fruit of current interest in the police. While there are significant differences among them, they share a fundamental assumption that city police departments should be much better than they are. The shortfall is explained largely by the allegation that most Americans hypocritically want the police to keep other Americans from participating in vices which they themselves enjoy. A recurrent theme in all three books suggests that if only the police didn't have to spend so much time on arresting alcoholics, prostitutes, homosexuals, drug addicts and sellers, and gamblers, they could spend more time on serious crimes or on destructive breaches of the peace.

Yet it seems to me clear from these books themselves that it is the police presence which is most effective in abating crime. The glamorous work of learning who did what after it happened represents only a tiny part of police work. The police are most successful in catching the criminals involved in one offense when they stumble on them in the course of committing another. The cost and invasion of privacy that would be involved in developing a significantly better investigating arm is, to this reader at least, frightening to contemplate. (I might go further and admit that I cannot imagine a social order so nearly perfect that it wouldn't be better with a little corruption, but I will agree that it is almost impossible to develop a formula for keeping corruption within the limits I believe desirable.)

Of the three books under review here, *Vice Squad* is the least interesting and the most apocalyptic. Robert H. Williams tells us on an early page that American society is "hideously and hopelessly" corrupt. He documents this assertion with familiar episodes from national politics, including the dairy farmers and their influencing of legislation through bribery, the mayoralty of Richard Daley in Chicago, and the nomination of Haynsworth and Carswell to the Supreme Court. This is a mere warm-up for Williams, however, who broadens his charge to include: "the corruption of basic decency by banks, grocery stores, newspapers, broadcasters, the chamber of commerce, civil servants, politicians, lawyers, accountants, farmers, labor leaders, construction companies, railroads, shippers, and the people who serve you dirty tasteless food and don't put ashtrays on the counter because they want you to choke it down and get the hell out and make room for the next unfortunate sonofabitch who is scared, like you, because he has heard that there is corruption on the police force."

The implications of so long a catalogue of malfeasance are not clear to this reader. Perhaps other nonsmokers will believe with me that the absence of ashtrays on the counter may signify a restaurateur's dislike for smoking rather than his taste for evil. In any case, Williams continues from this point to give a city-by-city rundown of how graft has been collected by plainclothes policemen and their chiefs in return for protecting prostitutes and madams from prosecution, and for shielding policy-bank operators, and even narcotics peddlers.

For sheer narrative interest the stories cannot match early Lincoln Steffens. Williams's notions about the extent of American corruption also deny him Steffens's primitive hope that wealthy, stolid, but honest business leaders could be lured from their clubrooms to run the cities with the same efficient integrity that allegedly characterized their business dealings. Williams concludes with a flourish of quotations from Ramsey Clark, the Pennsylvania Crime Commission, and Robert K. Woetzel. Woetzel, in turn, quotes from de Tocqueville, in apparent endorsement of reaching a *modus vivendi* with half-hearted enforcement of the laws against vices. The laws, of course, would remain on the books. By the standards which Williams proclaims at the start of his enterprise, this would seem clearly to place de Tocqueville on the list of the corrupt.

IN *City Police*, Jonathan Rubinstein accepts a much more serious assignment. He will, he says, tell his readers what the work of policemen amounts to and will subject the police force of a major city to an institutional analysis that will identify the goals of the several hierarchical levels in the department. He will systematically describe the roles played by the major groups

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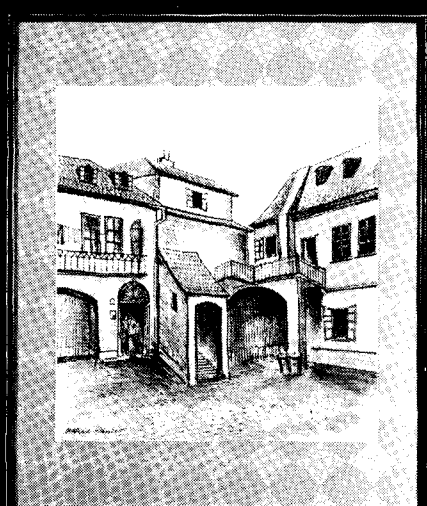

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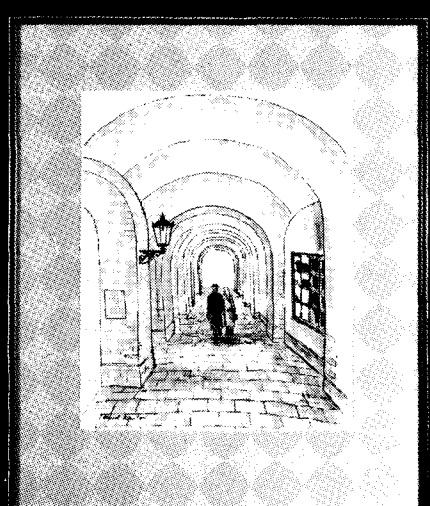

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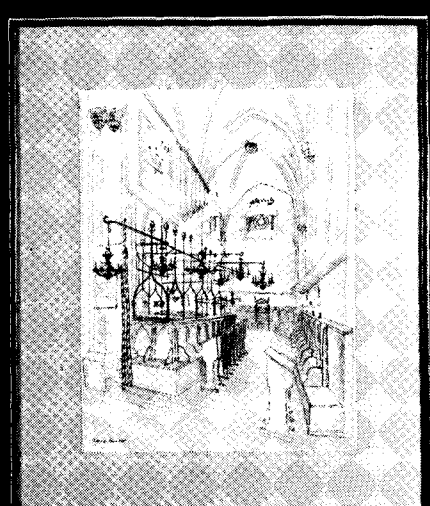

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within the department, and even communicate to the outsider some sense of the feelings (one might even call it the consciousness) of the rank-and-file patrolman and sergeant.

In this laudable effort, the book falls short of success. Rubinstein, a newspaperman, is clearly happiest when he is recounting anecdotes culled from his own experiences as a special student in the Philadelphia police academy, or from his acquaintances on the force. He is less comfortable with the systematic analysis of the police department as an organization, or even in making clear the relations between officers and patrolmen within a single precinct. Frequently, the anecdotes have no clear connection with the expository material which they seem intended to fill out and clarify. Finally, the book is far too long for its material.

Despite these shortcomings, Rubinstein provides interesting material about the policeman's life. Two points are worth repeating even in this brief review. The first must depress anyone who believes in governmental action to improve the human condition. Rubinstein tells us that "public-housing projects are the most disliked and feared places where a policeman is obliged to work," and he provides us with a long catalogue of the architectural horrors of public-housing projects in Philadelphia. Remembering the humane enthusiasm and determination that have gone into the process of making public housing possible, and hearing now this result, one wonders how a writer can remain sanguine about the chances of significantly improving the work of any social institution—the police included. Yet Rubinstein seems to feel that police work could be improved if "the compromising and questionable character of some obligations" were lifted from the police force. He is referring, of course, to the vice activity that looms so large in police work—dealing with alcoholics, for example. But in talking about alcoholics, Rubinstein remarks—and here is the second point I found interesting—that police work would be simpler and more easily understood if the police didn't, on occasion, have to sweep alcoholic derelicts off the street and charge them with the offense of drunkenness. Having said this, he admits ruefully that the public would demand that *someone* get the drunks off the sidewalk, and if the police had no responsibility for the job, then another force of men would have to be recruited to do the same thing. This has a ring of truth that *Vice Squad* never attains.

Serpico is a bug-eyed tale of a wonder cop. Frank Serpico is a culture hero who looks and acts like a counter-culture hero: a policeman with a beard who learned that Bronx plainclothesmen and their superiors, including some of very high rank in the New York City police department, took bribes. He was ultimately willing to testify to what he knew about all this. Other policemen, of course, have also testified to the extent of payoffs for prostitution, liquor, and gambling protection, but Serpico differs because he was himself not involved. Most other police witnesses have been tainted by the suspicion that they were giving evidence to protect themselves from prosecution or to minimize its consequences.

Peter Maas, the author of this life of Serpico, however, has not come to praise Serpico merely for his courage and probity. We must also hear Serpico praised for his wit in dealing with prostitutes, his sexual attractiveness, his quaint Neapolitan descent, his social successes in the West Village, and that special quality which makes so persuasive an appeal to so many contemporaries: the crankiness which is held to prove that Serpico is "his own man." Yet those who admire the loner's quality in art, religion, or civilian life, may nonetheless wonder how much nonconformist behavior should be encouraged among the members of a police department. The risks clearly troubled Commissioners Howard Leary and Patrick Murphy for reasons which Maas resists understanding. His book reads rather like a campaign biography on its way to becoming a movie.

At a time when the urban safety that middle-class families once took for granted is disappearing, the city police obviously become a subject of great interest. Middle-class people come into contact with police generally in two ways—directing traffic in real life, and solving crimes in fiction. The difference between the two roles emphasizes the ambiguity of public attitudes toward the police. We expect them, at once, to be clever enough to solve mysteries and, to use their words, apprehend perpetrators; but we expect them also to overlook our own minor peccadilloes. Ambiguous expectations do not necessarily imply that the expecters are corrupt, but they usually do produce ambiguous results.

The cure which seems now to be advocated for the disappointing results is to eliminate the ambiguity by declaring that all the acts for which we plead for tolerance should, as a matter of law, be no longer considered criminal. As Rubinstein suggests in the passage about drunks, such a simple declaration may very well not remove the trouble. The acts so legalized will remain largely unacceptable to those who are not at that moment committing them. Even if they were declared no longer criminal, it seems highly likely that a list of other acts which are not now considered criminal would become so (even, one feels, under the sponsorship of many worthy people who would de-criminalize the vices). Environmental offenses, commercial frauds, lack of "decency" by landlords—these may well come to be codified with suitable penalties. Criminalizing such behavior would require a new kind of police enforcement that, once again, would strike many as unnecessary and hypocritical, and would lead over again to the same ambiguities that now accompany the prosecution of vice. The guardians, in any period, can profit from the difference between the standards that the majority of citizens would apply to each other, and the standards they would apply to themselves. If this is a definition of corruption, at least it need not be considered a recent invention, or an American one.

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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

KING: 19 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine,
SUPER KING: 21 mg. "tar", 1.5 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, FTC Report FEB. '73.

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Annette and Carlos Ramirez, owners of Daly Shoe Store in East Los Angeles. Their store was financed by a minority bank.

Why Exxon banks in the barrio.

Because the money deposited in minority banks helps finance a lot of important things. Like new and renovated housing, small business loans and various improvements in the community.

But first, maybe we should explain exactly what a minority bank is. It's a bank, usually full service, owned and run by members of a minority group and located in a minority area. These banks are the same as every other bank you deal with. They're FDIC insured and they operate under the same state and federal regulations and they pay the same interest as other banks.

Except they strive to keep the money circulating *inside* the inner city where it works for the inner city people. And maybe more important, they speak the right language—whether it's "Soul" or Spanish—to people who might never have had much opportunity to talk to a banker before.

But money can be hard to come by in the inner city and we urge other businesses to help minority banks with regular deposits. Because sometimes it's nice to build things —besides interest.

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